Revised February 21, 2024

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)
TITLE: Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools
Action: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Amendment NO. 2
ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications (RFA)
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-R-OAR-APS-24-02
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 66.034
Date: February 21, 2024

Summary: This Notice makes amendments to the above referenced funding opportunity to update information about the budget detail, budget narrative, page limit, and human subject studies.

Specifically, amendments are made on the following pages:

Page 29. The Mandatory Documents was revised to remove 'Budget Narrative' from the attachments list, while a budget narrative should still be included it should not be a separate attachment outside of the 10-page project narrative.

Page 18. Section F. Human Subject Studies was revised to highlight that human subject research activities must align with EPA human subjects requirements and need approval from an EPA Human Subjects Research Review Official before human research activities can commence.

Page 41. Section a. Budget Detail was revised to strike language indicating the budget detail and budget table are not part of the 10-page limit, and language was added clarifying that these items should be included in the project narrative and are part of the 10-page limit.

Page 45. The Example Budget Table heading was revised to strike language stating it is not part of the 10-page limit.

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IMPORTANT DATES:

January 11, 2024	Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Opens
January 25, 2024	Information Session I
February 22, 2024	Optional Intent to Apply
February 12, 2024	Information Session II
March 5, 2024	Final Date to Submit Questions
March 19, 2024	NOFO Closes – Application Deadline
May 2024	Anticipated Notification of Selection
October 2024	Anticipated Awards

Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **March 19, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)** to be considered for funding.

To allow for efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests electronic submittal of an *Optional Notice of Intent to Apply* by February 22, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. (ET) to iaqschools@epa.gov. Submission of an *Optional Notice of Intent to Apply* email (that announces an organization's intent to submit an application by providing a project title, project areas, the applicant's name, and the expected funding amount that will be requested) will help EPA better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted applications.

NOTE: Prior to naming a contractor (including consultants) or subrecipient in your application as a "partner," please carefully review Section IV.d. of EPA's Solicitation Clauses that are incorporated by reference in this announcement and discussed in relevant part here. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200. Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their grant application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements as described in Section

IV.d. of EPA's Solicitation Clauses. **Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering, or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the firm's role in preparing the application or based on an assertion that the individual or firm has "unique qualifications."**

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. EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500 as well as EPA's rule on Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in EPA Programs in 40 CFR Part 33. **The Agency does not accept justifications for sole source contracts for services or products available in the commercial marketplace such as consulting, data analysis, or project management.**

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background and Summary

Summary

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) announces the availability of grant funds under Section 60106 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which provides funding "for grants and other activities to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other air pollutants at schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities under subsections (a) through (c) of Section 103 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7403(a)–(c)) and Section 105 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 7405)."

The NOFO solicits applications from Tribes, states, territories, local governments/educational agencies, and nonprofit organizations to enable more low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) schools and/or school districts[1] across rural, suburban, and/or urban areas to monitor and reduce GHG emissions and indoor air pollutants through the development and adoption of comprehensive indoor air quality (IAQ) management plans consistent with EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit and Framework, Energy Savings Plus Health Guidance, Preventive Maintenance Guidance, and other EPA recommended IAQ best practices (hereafter collectively referred to as "EPA best practices").

Entities with experience conducting national, regional, or multi-state IAQ management capacity building programs, providing IAQ training, executing IAQ research in school settings, or disseminating IAQ standards/policies that have achieved positive outcomes (especially with schools and Tribal entities) are encouraged to apply.

The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately $32,000,000. EPA anticipates awarding four to six grants of $5,000,000 to $8,000,000 to support five years of IAQ and GHG reduction activities. Grants will fund activities at the state, multi-state, regional, and national level. The final number and value of grants awarded through this NOFO will be subject to the availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations.

Eligible applicants may submit only one grant application to fund activities in two or more of the four project areas listed below:

1 K-12 public schools and school districts" in this program are inclusive of state and local education agencies, charter schools, and Tribally controlled schools (excepting for-profit schools, which are not eligible under this grant). A directory of school districts can be found at: https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/

Tip: Federally operated Tribal schools, like those managed by the Bureau of Indian Education, are not eligible to apply for and receive funding through this NOFO, but they can participate in and benefit from the activities funded by this NOFO.

1. **IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building** targeting facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers at K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income and disadvantaged communities.
2. **Tribal IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building** targeting facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers at K-12 schools in Tribal communities.
3. **IAQ and GHG Reduction Training and Education Campaign** for facility management staff and health officers at K-12 schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities, and/or the development of qualified K-12 school staff necessary to execute comprehensive IAQ and GHG Reduction Plans.
4. **IAQ and GHG Reduction Research and Demonstration Projects** in K-12 schools located in low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities.

Background

EPA and the broader scientific community have identified and characterized significant risks to public health and the environment from GHG emissions that fuel climate change. EPA and the broader scientific community have also identified and characterized significant risks to public health from indoor environmental contaminants that are commonly found in homes, schools, offices, and nonindustrial commercial buildings where Americans spend up to 90 percent of their time. Levels of air pollution are often two to five times higher indoors and occasionally are 100 times higher than outdoor levels.[2] Indoor air contaminants include (but are not limited to): radon, viruses/bacteria, cleaning chemicals, asbestos, and environmental asthma triggers, such as secondhand smoke, dust, mold, particulate matter, combustion byproducts, and volatile organic compounds.

Exposure to poor IAQ has been linked to decreased work productivity and academic performance, shortened lifespan and reduced effectiveness of facility systems and equipment, the spread of airborne bacteria and viruses like COVID-19, missed work, absenteeism in school, and health effects from coughing, eye irritation, and headaches to more serious issues like severe allergic/asthma reactions, lung and heart disease, cancer, and death. In the United States (U.S.), poor IAQ is estimated to cost $36-$92 billion a year in adverse health and productivity effects.[3]

Approximately one-sixth of the U.S. population attends or works in roughly 130,000 school facilities[4] around the country. Fifty percent of K-12 students attend schools that do not have IAQ management plans or programs in place.[5] This is concerning because a child's developing organ systems are often more sensitive to environmental stressors, and children are frequently

2 Wallace, Lance A., et al. Total Exposure Assessment Methodology (TEAM) Study: Personal exposures, indoor-outdoor relationships, and breath levels of volatile organic compounds in New Jersey. *Environ. Int.* 1986, *12*, 369-387. LINK

3 William J. Fisk and Arthur H. Rosenfeld, Estimates of Improved Productivity and Health from Better Indoor Environments. *Indoor Air Volume 7, Issue 3* 1997. LINK **Note**: the IAQ health and productivity costs were adjusted for inflation from 1996 to 2023 dollars with the US Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator.

4 National Center for Education Statistics: LINK A and LINK B

5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), School Health Policies and Practices Study, 2016. LINK

more heavily exposed to toxic substances in the environment than are adults.[6] Also, children and individuals with asthma (one in five of which are under 18 years old),[7] allergies, chemical sensitivities, heart or respiratory diseases, suppressed immune systems, and even contact lens wearers are more susceptible to effects of indoor air contaminants that are common at schools. For example, exposure to common allergens at schools like dust mites, pests, and molds can trigger severe asthma symptoms or allergic reactions, while exhaust from school buses or other nearby vehicles has been associated with asthma onset in children and adults.[8]

In addition to children's higher health risks and higher exposure to IAQ pollutants, children in minority, low-income, and other underserved populations, as well as children with disabilities, are more likely to experience higher exposures to multiple environmental contaminants where they live, learn, and play and are at a higher risk for the associated health effects.[9 & 10] This is due, in part, to the fact that high poverty districts spend on average 37% less per school on capital investments (including maintenance) than in low-poverty districts.[11] This means that students that attend schools in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities are more likely to be learning in classrooms with pest problems, legacy toxics, poor IAQ, and a lack of adequate heating and air conditioning. Properly addressing IAQ and GHG emissions at K-12 schools across the country is vital, especially in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities that have more environmental challenges and less resources available to address them.

Implementing actions that diminish risks through energy efficiency measures is a well-documented method of reducing GHG emissions in schools. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure good IAQ and provide optimal ventilation and filtration to achieve healthy, productive learning environments for students and staff. To lower GHG emissions and reduce indoor air pollutants, school facilities must manage the delicate balance between reducing energy use while still maintaining good IAQ.

There is substantial evidence that proper management of IAQ in schools improves student academic performance, reduces absenteeism by improving health and reducing the spread of airborne illnesses like COVID-19, lengthens the lifespan of building systems, and lowers GHG emissions from school facilities while providing significant savings through lower energy consumption.

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6 American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Environmental Health. (2003). Developmental toxicity: Special considerations based on age and developmental state. In Etzel, R., & S. Balk (Eds.), *Pediatric Environmental Health* (Second ed., pp. 9–36). Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Environmental Health.

7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Most Recent Asthma Data. 2021. LINK

8 Health Effects Institute, Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Selected Health Effects of Long-Term Exposure to Traffic-Related Air Pollution. 2022. LINK

9 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2003). America's Children and the Environment: Measures of Contaminants, Body Burdens, and Illnesses (176pp, 1.1M). Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA/240/R-03/001.

10 Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Your Child's Environmental Health. 2002. LINK

11 21st Century School Fund, Inc., International WELL Building Institute pbc, and National Council on School Facilities. *2021 State of Our Schools Report*. LINK

B. Program Goals and Objectives

Primary Goal:

Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction and Comprehensive Indoor Air Risk Reduction for K-12 Schools and School Districts in Low-Income, Disadvantaged, and Tribal Communities to Improve Children's Health, Wellbeing, and Educational Achievement

GHGs (such as carbon dioxide and methane) and common indoor air contaminants (e.g., radon, secondhand smoke, wildfire smoke, mold, particulate matter, asbestos, combustion byproducts, volatile organic compounds, and airborne viruses or bacteria) are often best addressed holistically through policies and programs. GHG reductions and IAQ improvements in buildings can be obtained through: 1) better facility design, construction, operation, maintenance, and renovation practices; 2) policies and programs that support behavior change among occupants, such as updating or adopting new building codes, local and state ordinances, and IAQ standards of practice; 3) training programs; 4) air quality monitoring programs; and 5) and education campaigns.

Applications from eligible entities (as described in Section III.A.) must include activities in two or more of the four project areas detailed below. These project areas are intended to build capacity and improve state, regional, and national IAQ systems, enabling K-12 schools and/or school districts located in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities to sustainably reduce GHG emissions and address IAQ problems through the development and adoption of comprehensive IAQ management plans consistent with EPA best practices.

Applications will be placed in separate Tracks depending on which project areas are addressed in the application. Applications that only address combinations of project areas 1 through 3 will be placed in Track A. Applications that include project area 4 (in addition to at least one of project areas 1 through 3) will be placed in Track B. Track B will be evaluated by an additional criterion, as described in Section V. Track A and Track B applications will be ranked separately. The EPA selection official intends to make selections from top ranked applications in each ranking list.

1. **IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building** targeting facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers at K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income and disadvantaged communities. IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building project area activities could include: coalition building; multisector discipline convening; providing support to a diverse mix of IAQ network(s); and any other activities that build sustainable long-term national, regional, or multi-state capability and intent of K-12 schools and/or school districts (especially among facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers) to develop and adopt comprehensive IAQ and GHG

reduction plans and programs for school facilities, during school rehab projects, and during new construction.

2. **Tribal IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building** targeting facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers at K-12 schools in Tribal communities. Tribal IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building activities could include: coalition building; multisector discipline convening; providing support to a diverse mix of IAQ network(s); and any other activities that build sustainable long-term national, regional, or multi-state capability and intent of K-12 schools and/or school districts (especially among facility management staff, health officers and key decision makers) to develop and adopt comprehensive IAQ and GHG reduction plans and programs for school facilities, during school rehab projects, and during new construction.
3. **IAQ and GHG Reduction Training and Education Campaign** for facility management staff and health officers at K-12 schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities, and/or the development of qualified K-12 school staff necessary to execute comprehensive IAQ and GHG reduction plans in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.
   a) Training activities could include classes (in person or virtual), development of educational materials, mentorship programs, Registered Apprenticeship Programs, and other activities/content/trainings that provide K-12 facility management staff and health officers with the necessary training to develop, sustainably fund, and adopt comprehensive IAQ management plans and/or programs in K-12 schools.
   b) IAQ and GHG Reduction Education Campaign activities could include sustained efforts to deliver communications (press releases, emails, social media content, public service announcements, radio/podcast content, etc.), advertisements, events, and educational materials that are designed to increase school facility management staff and health officer awareness and knowledge of IAQ and GHG issues, their impacts, practical solutions, and local/state/federal resources (funding, guidance, training, technical assistance, etc.) to help address IAQ and GHG issues.
4. **IAQ and GHG Reduction Research and Demonstration Projects** in K-12 schools located in low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities. Research and Demonstration Project activities could include testing different IAQ and GHG reduction intervention strategies in buildings to identify the most effective, sustainable, and replicable options in particular indoor spaces, measurement/monitoring of IAQ variables (e.g., carbon dioxide [CO_2], particulate matter [PM]), and/or GHG emissions before and after interventions to improve indoor air quality through activities addressing ventilation or filtration, and/or displaying real-time results or before-and-after intervention results as part of education or stakeholder outreach efforts with school staff, students, and/or the community. Applications may include research components such as building blocks for demonstration, training, education and/or outreach projects. In such cases, proposals should clearly articulate this link, explain why the research is necessary for the project's success, and ensure that such research does not already exist.

Activities in these four project areas should achieve one or more of the objectives detailed below:

- **All project areas should:**
    - Reduce GHG emissions and comprehensive indoor air risks in K-12 schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.[12]
    - Increase low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal K-12 school and school district facility managers', health officers', and key decision makers' awareness of the scientifically validated IAQ interventions that provide the most educational and health benefits at reasonable cost (and with the best energy efficiency/GHG emission reductions), and the most practical ways to implement those interventions as part of a K-12 school or school district's comprehensive IAQ management plan.
- **IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building Projects:** Increase the number of K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income and disadvantaged communities that develop and adopt comprehensive IAQ and GHG management plans and/or IAQ and GHG reduction programs consistent with EPA best practices.
- **Tribal IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building Projects:** Increase the number of K-12 schools and/or school districts in Tribal communities that develop and adopt comprehensive IAQ and GHG management plans and/or IAQ and GHG reduction programs consistent with EPA best practices.
- **IAQ Training and Education Campaign Projects:**
    - Increase and promote the number of well-trained and qualified facility management staff and health officers at K-12 schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities with the necessary training and skills to develop, sustainably fund, and adopt comprehensive IAQ management plans and/or programs consistent with EPA best practices.
        - If applicants propose K-12 staff training programs: Increase the availability of skilled, trained K-12 facility and health staff in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities that are necessary to execute IAQ activities in K-12 schools and school districts through high-quality training models such as Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
    - Increase the awareness and knowledge of IAQ and GHG issues, their impacts, practical solutions, and local/state/federal resources (funding, guidance, training, technical assistance, etc.) to help address IAQ and GHG issues among key decision makers, facility management staff, and health officers at K-12 schools and school districts located in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.
- **IAQ Research and Demonstration Projects:**
    - Increase the number of high-quality peer-reviewed IAQ scientific publications and data on 1) which IAQ and GHG reduction interventions and monitoring activities provide the most educational and health benefits at reasonable cost (and with the best energy efficiency) and 2) the most practical ways to

12 **Tip:** measures of GHG emissions and indoor air risk reduction can be 1) numerical like a comparison between the pre-intervention and post-intervention amounts of measured pollutants and 2) qualitative like evidence of an improved filter change protocol or a visible decrease in dust, mold, or other contaminants in rooms and ventilation systems

implement those interventions as part of a K-12 school or school district's comprehensive IAQ and GHG reduction management plan.
    - Increase awareness of IAQ management and GHG reduction scientific, technical, and demonstration project information among facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers at K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.

In addition to achieving one or more of the objectives above, applicants may also choose to include activities (in two or more of the four project areas) that build and/or improve state, regional, and national scale capacity or systems to:

- Increase the capacity of state, Tribal, and community programs to comprehensively address improvements to IAQ and GHG reductions in K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.
- Expand development and adoption of local, state and, national policies and standards of practice that address improvements to IAQ and reduce GHG emissions in K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.
- Increase the quality and availability of GHG/IAQ monitoring data in K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities to the public and research community.

C. Environmental Justice, Low-Income, Disadvantaged, and Tribal Communities

This program is responsive to the Administration's call for agencies to advance environmental justice in Executive Order 14096: *Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All*. Environmental Justice is the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability in agency decision making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment so that people:

a) are fully protected from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards, including those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and

b) have equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, policies, and investments.

Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate

the involvement of those potentially affected. EPA will evaluate environmental justice issues under criterion 4 of Section V.A. of this NOFO.

Disadvantaged communities are more likely to suffer from the disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts, and their adverse economic consequences. These disproportionate and adverse impacts may include:

- Differential proximity and exposure to environmental hazards;
- Greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to genetic predisposition, age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or poor nutrition);
- Unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (e.g., subsistence fishing or farming);
- Cumulative effects from multiple chemical and non-chemical stressors;
- Reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes due to language barriers, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources; and
- Degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, K-12 schools and school districts targeted by and benefitting from activities enabled by this funding should be A) located in a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community, as described below or B) have 50% (or more) of the served student population residing in a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community.

A community is defined as either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a geographically dispersed set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions. In addition, for disadvantaged communities that are geographically defined, "low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities" means a geographic area meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Any census tract that is included as disadvantaged in V 1.0 of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).[13]
2. Any census block group that is at or above the 90th percentile for any of V 2.2 of EJScreen's supplemental indexes when compared to the nation or state.[14]

13 CEJST has an interactive map and uses datasets that are environmental and socioeconomic indicators of burdens. Percentiles show how much burden each Census tract experiences compared to other tracts. To qualify as a disadvantaged community in the CEJST, one of the burden indicators must be above the 90th percentile. In addition, lands within the boundaries of Federally Recognized Tribes are also considered to be disadvantaged communities.

14 EJScreen is the EPA's environmental justice mapping and screening tool that uses national datasets for environmental and socioeconomic indicators to show how a selected area compares to the state, the EPA region, or the nation. EJScreen operates at a finer geographic scale of Census block groups than the CEJST, allowing EJScreen Supplemental Indexes to identify smaller areas that may be disadvantaged within a

3. Any census block group which scores at or above the 90th percentile for low-income in V 2.2 of EJScreen.
4. Any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in V 2.2 of EJScreen.[15]
5. Any K-12 school or school district located outside of a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community that serves a student population of 50% or more residing in a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community identified by criteria 1-4 in this section.[16]

NOTE: Applicants should prioritize K-12 schools and school districts in communities identified by criteria 1-4 above.

CEJST and EJScreen display lands within the boundaries of Federally Recognized Tribes on the map in order to designate those areas as disadvantaged communities. However, regardless of whether a Federally Recognized Tribe has land, all Federally Recognized Tribal entities are considered disadvantaged communities for the purposes of the Justice40 Initiative.

Justice40 Initiative: The goal of the Justice40 Initiative is to ensure that "…40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution." This grant program is considered a "covered program" in the Justice40 Initiative. The EPA is committed to meeting the objectives of the Justice40 Initiative set forth in Executive Order 14008. In addition, the EPA is committed to accelerating environmental justice in communities overburdened by pollution through its IRA investments, including through this grant program.

D. Environmental Results and Strategic Plan Information

Pursuant to Section 6.a. of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed grants agreements with the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements). Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental, public health, and educational improvement results of the proposed project(s) in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the Strategic Plan goals listed below.

larger non-disadvantaged area. To identify areas in EJScreen that meet one of the above definitions of a disadvantaged community, applicants should use the "Supplemental Indices" option under the tool's map layers.

15 As set forth in M-23-09, the Addendum to the Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative, M-21-28, on using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), "all Federally Recognized Tribal entities are considered disadvantaged communities for the purposes of the Justice40 Initiative." The CEJST uses the Bureau of Indian Affairs Land Area Representation dataset to depict American Indian land areas for Federally Recognized Tribes. The Tribal Lands category in EJScreen to use for this purpose includes Alaska Native Allotments (EPA Metadata Record), Alaska Native Villages (EPA Metadata Record), American Indian Reservations (EPA Metadata Record), American Indian Off-reservation Trust Lands (EPA Metadata Record), and Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas (EPA Metadata Record).

16 Students who attend K-12 schools are a geographically dispersed population. This means that students from disadvantaged, low-income, and/or Tribal communities could be attending a school that is located outside of a CEJST and/or EJScreen identified low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal community boundary (based on census tract data which does not always align well with school and school district boundaries). Criteria 5 is designed to help address this mapping challenge by helping ensure that more of the benefits from activities funded by this grant opportunity will be delivered to a greater number of students who live in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.

1. **Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan:** The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support:
   a. Goal 1, "Tackle the Climate Crisis;" Objective 1.1, "Reduce Emissions that Cause Climate Change;"
   b. Goal 2, "Take Decisive action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights;" Objective 2.1, "Promote Environmental Justice and Civil Rights at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Levels;" and Objective 2.2, "Embed Environmental Justice and Civil Rights into EPA's Programs, Policies, and Activities;" and
   c. Goal 4, "Ensure Clean and Healthy Air for All Communities;" Objective 4.1, "Improve Air Quality and Reduce Localized Pollution and Health Impacts;" and Objective 4.2, "Reduce Exposure to Radiation and Improve Indoor Air."

   All applications must be for projects/activities that support the EPA Strategic Plan goals and objectives above. For more information see EPA's FY 2022 - FY 2026 EPA Strategic Plan.

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

   Examples of some potential outputs from activities funded under this announcement may include, but are not limited to:
   - X (X to be proposed by applicant) Number of regional or national IAQ conference(s) focused on GHG reduction and IAQ intervention best practices, school IAQ plan development, or other relevant IAQ topics for facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers from K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities.
   - X (X to be proposed by applicant) Number of IAQ and GHG reduction management plan development course(s) and associated educational materials developed for facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers from K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities.
   - X (X to be proposed by applicant) Number of evidence-based peer-reviewed IAQ scientific publications and data on 1) which IAQ and GHG reductions interventions provide the most educational and health benefits at reasonable cost (and with the best energy efficiency/GHG reductions) and 2) the most practical ways to implement those interventions as part of a K-12 school or school district's comprehensive IAQ management plan.
   - A website, database, or other tool/product that allows the public to freely access the research publications and underlying data/monitoring data produced through funding from this grant in an easily accessible format.
   - Report(s) on the IAQ and GHG reduction research and demonstration projects.

- A document or guide for facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers from K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities that summarizes (existing and new) evidence-based, peer-reviewed research on 1) which IAQ interventions provide the most educational and health benefits at reasonable cost (and with the best energy efficiency/GHG reductions) and 2) the most practical ways to implement those interventions as part of a K-12 school or school district's comprehensive IAQ management plan.
- A report that details the estimated number of and geographic distribution of schools in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities with comprehensive GHG reduction and IAQ management/monitoring plans in place before activities funded by this grant take place.
- Report(s) on how many new schools and school districts (as well as their locations) have adopted new IAQ and GHG reduction/monitoring plans or programs because of the grant activities.
- Report(s) that detail the educational and health impacts and GHG reductions, as well as facility improvements or policy changes resulting from adoption of IAQ management plans due to grant activities and the geographic distribution [via National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) School ID and District ID numbers] of low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal schools and school districts that benefited from grant activities/projects.

<u>All recipients will be required to produce:</u>

- A detailed project plan for all activities/outputs and communication with the media/public prior to starting work.
- Periodic progress reports and a final report will also be required as specified in Section VI.B. "Reporting Requirement" of this NOFO.

3. **Outcomes:** The term "outcome" means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but should also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

   The primary outcome of activities funded by this NOFO is expected to be significant GHG emission and comprehensive indoor air risk reductions for K-12 schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities enabled by IAQ capacity building, Tribal IAQ capacity building, IAQ training and education, and IAQ research and demonstration activities.[17] Additional expected outcomes from the activities and projects funded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

17 Applicants should propose qualitative and quantitative measures to show the GHG and indoor air reductions. Pre and post intervention measures could include sensor readings of GHG emissions or IAQ pollutants like PM2.5 and change in the number of mold or animal droppings seen in rooms and ventilation systems.

- A significant increase in the number of schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities that develop and adopt or improve existing comprehensive IAQ management and GHG reduction plans and programs consistent with EPA best practices.
- Increased awareness and knowledge of IAQ and GHG issues, their impacts, practical solutions, high quality air monitoring options, and resources that are available from states and the Federal government to help address IAQ/GHG issues among facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers at K-12 schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.
- Increased number of K-12 school and school district facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers with the necessary training and skills to develop then sustainably fund and adopt comprehensive IAQ management and GHG reduction plans and programs consistent with EPA best practices.
- Increased number of high-quality, evidence based, peer-reviewed IAQ research publications that identify which IAQ interventions provide the best, most cost effective, energy efficient/GHG reductions, and sustainable health and educational improvements in K-12 schools and what the most practical actions/policies are to implement them.
- Increased awareness of high-quality, evidence based, peer-reviewed IAQ research publications among facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers at K-12 schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.
- Expanded state, regional, and national networks of IAQ professionals dedicated to improving IAQ and reducing GHG emissions in schools through the adoption of comprehensive IAQ management plans and programs consistent with EPA best practices during and after expiration of grant funding provided via this NOFO.
- Improved educational outcomes for K-12 students.
- Improved health outcomes of K-12 students, teachers, and school/school district employees.
- Reduced absenteeism among K-12 students and sick days taken by teachers and other K-12 school and school district employees.
- Lowered energy and maintenance costs for K-12 schools and school districts.
- Lowered healthcare costs and improved economic outputs in communities with K-12 schools and school districts that adopt comprehensive IAQ management plans and programs consistent with EPA best practices during and after expiration of grant funding provided via this NOFO.
- Increased number of highly skilled IAQ K-12 staff in areas with workforce shortages necessary for executing IAQ plans in K-12 schools and school districts located in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.

E. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for this action is the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (Section 60106(a)), which provides funding "for grants and other activities to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants at schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities under subsections (a) through (c) of Section 103 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7403(a)-(c)) and Section 105 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 7405)."

Section 103 of the Clean Air Act, §103(b)(3) authorizes EPA to award grants for research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, and studies related to the causes, effects, (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, and the control of air pollution.

Note: Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project.

F. Human Subjects Studies

Human subject research activities must align with EPA human subjects requirements and need approval from an EPA Human Subjects Research Review Official (HSRRO) before any human research activities can commence. Submission of human subject study paperwork will occur after grant selection and before funds are provided and work commences. See also EPA Solicitation Clauses linked in Section I.I. of this NOFO.

G. Minority Serving Institutions

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

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

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061(2)). A list of these schools can be found at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities
3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at Hispanic-Serving Institutions
4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; and
5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at Predominately Black Institutions

H. Requirements for Increasing Access to Results of EPA-Funded Extramural Scientific Research

It is EPA policy to ensure that the results of all EPA-funded extramural scientific research through the Research and Demonstration project area in this NOFO is accessible to the public to the greatest extent feasible consistent with applicable law; policies and Orders; the Agency's mission; resource constraints; and U.S. national, homeland, and economic security. This entails maximizing, at no charge, access by the public to peer-reviewed, scientific research journal publications or associated author manuscripts, and their underlying digital research data, created in whole or in part with EPA funds, while protecting personal privacy; recognizing proprietary interests, confidential business information and intellectual property rights; and avoiding significant negative impact on intellectual property rights, innovation and U.S. competitiveness.

EPA's Policy for Increasing Access to Results of EPA-Funded Extramural Scientific Research may be accessed at: Non-EPA Researcher Requirements. Terms and conditions implementing this policy may be accessed at: Non-EPA Researcher Requirements. Applicants that submit applications selected under this solicitation shall be required to develop a Scientific Data Management Plan (SDMP) that addresses public access to EPA-funded scientific research data. See the SDMP clause in Section VI. for details on the content of an SDMP. Selected applicants proposing activities in the Research and Demonstration project area will also be asked to provide past performance information on whether journal publications or associated author manuscripts, and the associated underlying scientific research data and metadata, under prior assistance agreements were made publicly accessible. These items will be evaluated after applicant selection, but prior to award. Reasonable, necessary, and allocable costs for data management and public access as discussed in EPA's Policy for Increasing Access to Results of EPA-Funded Extramural Scientific Research may be included in extramural research applications and detailed in the budget justification described in Section IV or as otherwise directed.

I. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to Sections III., IV., V., and VI., and/or awards made under this solicitation can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses. These provisions are important for applying to this solicitation and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact listed in Section VII. of this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

A. Amount of Funding Available

The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is approximately $32,000,000. Funding is dependent upon Agency appropriations, funding availability, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.

B. Number and Amount of Awards

EPA anticipates awarding four to six grants under this announcement, subject to the availability of funds, the quantity and quality of applications received, broadest geographic impact of activities, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. Awards are expected to be between $5,000,000 to $8,000,000 and will support five years of IAQ and GHG reduction activities.

The amount of federal funding requested by an applicant must be at least $5,000,000 and may not exceed $8,000,000.

C. Partial Funding

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

D. Additional Awards

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this solicitation, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions. In addition, EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this announcement or to make a different number of awards than anticipated.

E. Award Funding and Incremental/Full Funding

EPA anticipates awarding full funding to selected applicants, but awards may be fully or incrementally funded, as appropriate, based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

F. Period of Performance

The period of performance for awards resulting from this solicitation will be up to five years with an estimated project start date in October 2024.

G. Funding Type

Successful applicant(s) will be issued a grant.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

A. Eligible Entities

Consistent with Assistance Listing No.66.034 and EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements (EPA Order § 5700.5A1), competition under this solicitation is available to states (including the District of Columbia); local governments and educational agencies; U.S. territories and possessions; Indian Tribes; and nonprofit organizations.

Consistent with the definition of nonprofit organization at 2 CFR § 200.1, the term nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest; is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that 2 CFR § 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of nonprofit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a nonprofit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR § 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this NOFO. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR § 200.1 are also eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible. Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status, such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section

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

For-profit organizations (which includes for-profit K-12 schools) and federal agencies are not eligible to apply to this funding opportunity. In addition, 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 for this funding opportunity.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

No cost sharing/matching funds or other leveraged resources are required as a condition of eligibility under this competition. Applicants should refer to Section IV.C. for additional information about cost share/matching funds and other leveraged resources.

Funds awarded under this program cannot be used to meet the matching funds requirement under another federal grant program.

C. Threshold Criteria

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., B., and C., to be considered eligible. If necessary, EPA may contact applicants to clarify threshold eligibility questions prior to making an eligibility determination. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration due to the threshold eligibility review or due to a lack of timely response to EPA inquiries will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV. or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.C. with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the 10-page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.

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

3. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. See Section IV. of this solicitation for instructions to submit through Grants.gov.

   NOTE: Registering in SAM.gov or Grants.gov can take a month or more. Applicants are advised to begin their registration process early, so it does not interfere with drafting the application near the deadline.

4. Applications must demonstrate that they support the following elements of EPA's Strategic Plan:
   a. Goal 1, "Tackle the Climate Crisis;" Objective 1.1, "Reduce Emissions that Cause Climate Change;"
   b. Goal 2, "Take Decisive action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights;" Objective 2.1, "Promote Environmental Justice and Civil Rights at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Levels;" and Objective 2.2, "Embed Environmental Justice and Civil Rights into EPA's Programs, Policies, and Activities;" and
   c. Goal 4, "Ensure Clean and Healthy Air for All Communities;" Objective 4.1, "Improve Air Quality and Reduce Localized Pollution and Health Impacts;" and Objective 4.2, "Reduce Exposure to Radiation and Improve Indoor Air" of EPA's Strategic Plan as described in Section I.C. and the project areas identified under the goals and objectives in Section I.B.

5. Applications must request EPA funds at or between $5,000,000 and $8,0000,000 as specified in Section II.B. of this NOFO, or they will not be deemed eligible and will not be reviewed.

6. Applications which request EPA funds for permanent improvements or renovations to buildings, except for research and demonstration projects in schools, will not be reviewed.

7. Applications must include activities under two or more of the four project areas provided in Section I.B. Activities unrelated to a project area will not be reviewed. Applications that have no activities associated with two or more of the four project areas will not be reviewed.

8. Applicants can submit no more than one application per organization. If an applicant submits more than one application, EPA will contact the applicant to determine which application(s) to withdraw. If the applicant does not respond to EPA within two business

days of being contacted, EPA will review the last application(s) submitted and will disregard all others.

D. Ineligible Activities

Applicants are encouraged to review RAIN-2019-G02, "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance" for further guidance on determining if a cost is eligible. The inclusion of ineligible activities may lead to a portion, or all of the application not being reviewed.

1. **Ineligible Costs or Activities.** 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. Activities must meet the following requirements to be eligible for funding:

    a. For Project Areas 1-3, EPA will not consider activities that promote the use of air cleaning and energy efficiency technologies of unknown or unclear performance against indoor air pollutants and GHG reductions such as bipolar ionization, ozone generators, ionizing air cleaners, and oxidizing air cleaners. All tasks and activities must be supported by robust scientific evidence in peer-reviewed publications and be consistent with EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit and Framework, Energy Savings Plus Health Guidance, Preventive Maintenance Guidance, and other EPA recommended IAQ best practices.

    b. For Project Area 4, EPA will not consider proposals that do not include both research and demonstration components. EPA will also not consider proposals that fund the research or demonstration of bipolar ionization, ozone generators, ionizing air cleaners, and oxidizing air cleaners.
    c. Except for in demonstration projects, funding cannot be used to make permanent facility improvements.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

A. How to Register to Apply for Grants under this Competition

NOTE: Registering in SAM.gov or Grants.gov can take a month or more. Applicants are advised to begin their registration process early, so it does not interfere with drafting the application near the deadline.

Applicants should visit How to Register to Apply for Grants for additional information. All EPA grant applications must be submitted online, except in limited circumstances. Organizations must be registered in two government systems to apply for EPA grants:

1. SAM.gov registers organizations to conduct business with the U.S. Government, which includes federal grants.
2. Grants.gov is the official system for managing all federal grant applications.

These two systems share information. Together, they provide access to everything needed to identify federal grant opportunities and to complete the online application process.

Note that individuals can access both systems through a single user account set up in Login.gov. Creating a Login.gov account is easy. If you do not have a Login.gov account, you will be prompted to create one when you register with SAM.gov or Grants.gov. Learn more about Login.gov.

If you have done business with the federal government previously, you can and should check your entity status using your government issued Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active. Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current E-Business (Ebiz) point of contact name and email address. The Ebiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality. If the point of contact has changed, you may need to contact the Federal Service Desk for help with your SAM.gov account: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm (ET).

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the Frequently Asked Questions document for additional details.

Follow these steps to register to apply for EPA grants. **Start the registration process early**. The process can take a month or more. Errors or inconsistencies in registration in the two systems can prolong the process. Applicants are encouraged to start the registration process **before you begin working on your application**.

Step 1. Register Your Organization in SAM.gov

Organizations must register with SAM.gov to obtain a UEI, which is a 12-character alphanumeric identifier assigned to each unique organization. There is no fee for registering with SAM.gov and registration must be renewed annually.

Registration in SAM.gov requires providing assertions, representations and certifications, and other information so that the federal government can verify the existence and uniqueness of the organization. Follow these steps to get started:

1. Go to the SAM.gov Entity Registration page. Review the "Before You Get Started" section and download the Entity Registration Checklist to help prepare.
2. Click the "Get Started" button when you are ready. You may be prompted to accept the usage terms and sign in through Login.gov. If necessary, click the "Get Started" button again after you sign in.
3. You will be prompted to choose what you want to do. Most grant applicants will select the option to "Register for Financial Assistance Awards Only."
4. Select the appropriate option and click the Next button.
5. Proceed through the registration process by answering the questions and providing the necessary information.

Organizations will need to designate an E-Business Point of Contact (Ebiz POC). The Ebiz POC is likely to be your organization's Chief Financial Officer or authorizing official. There can be only one Ebiz POC for each unique organization. The Ebiz POC will:

- Manage the SAM.gov account and login.
- Set up the Grants.gov profile for the organization (see Step 2 below).
- Oversee all activities for the organization within Grants.gov.
- Assign all roles in Grants.gov for individuals from the organization who will be involved in applying for grants, including the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), Expanded AOR roles, Workspace Manager, and Custom roles (see Step 3 below).

Note: The Ebiz POC does not submit grant proposals for the organization. Proposals are submitted by the AOR in Grants.gov. After the information submitted through the registration process is authenticated, the Ebiz POC will receive an email from SAM.gov indicating that the registration is active.

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

Once your SAM.gov account is active, you must register in Grants.gov. Grants.gov will electronically receive your organization information, such as Ebiz POC email address and UEI.

Step 2. Create a User Account and Applicant Profile in Grants.gov

After obtaining a UEI, an organization must create an applicant profile in Grants.gov.

The Ebiz POC will set up the applicant profile in 2 steps:

1. Create a user account in Grants.gov with the same email address used by the Ebiz POC in SAM.gov. The email address is used to match the Ebiz POC from SAM.gov to Grants.gov.
2. Create the applicant profile in Grants.gov using the UEI obtained from SAM.gov.

Grants.gov registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal grant before, please review the Grants.gov applicant registration instructions. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, the Ebiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to members of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an AOR. Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in Grants.gov. Please review the Intro to Grants.gov - Understanding User Roles and Learning Workspace – User Roles and Workspace Actions for details on this important process. Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

Contact Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov to resolve technical issues with Grants.gov. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

Step 3. Create Individual Grants.gov Accounts for Organization Members

There is no fee for registering with Grants.gov. Each member of the organization who will participate in the online grant application process needs to register an individual account on Grants.gov.

1. Go to the Grants.gov registration page.
2. Complete the form, which includes specifying a username and password. This username and password are used to create the Grants.gov account. You will be prompted to link the Grants.gov account to your Login.gov account.
3. Associate your individual account with the organization's UEI. You will also enter the organization's Profile Name and your Job Title.

The organization's Ebiz POC can delegate administrative roles to other Grants.gov users associated with the UEI, as necessary. Learn more about managing roles in Grants.gov.

Step 4. Learn How to Use Workspace in Grants.gov

Workspace is the application in Grants.gov that an organization's grant team uses when applying for federal grants. Workspace is a role-based tool, in which the user's assigned role controls permissions to perform specific actions, such as accessing and editing application forms. As noted in Step 3 above, the Ebiz POC has the initial responsibility to assign roles to individuals.

The core roles include:

- Expanded AOR: has the most privileges.

- Standard AOR: allows user to submit the final application and perform other actions.
- Workspace Manager: the minimum role required to create a workspace and begin work on an application.

Custom roles can also be created. Becoming familiar with Grants.gov workspace roles and understanding the process will help applicants be better prepared to submit applications. The videos on this page are just two of many Grants.gov training resources to help applicants get started.

If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined in the Exceptions to the Grants.gov Submission Requirement website. Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods.

B. Application Process

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to Grants.gov and click the "Search Grants" tab. Search the opportunity number associated with this opportunity – EPA-R-OAR-APS-24-02. Once the opportunity has been selected, click the red "Apply" button at the top of the View Grant Opportunity page.

The electronic submission of your application to this funding opportunity must be made by an official representative of your organization who has been registered as an AOR and is authorized by your organization to sign applications for federal financial assistance. If the submit button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization's Ebiz point of contact or contact Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application, specifically on the SF-424. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through Grants.gov does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award. Any application submitted after the **March 19, 2024, at 11:59 PM (ET) application submission deadline** will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

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:

a. Contact the Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
b. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
c. Send an email with Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools (EPA-R-OAR-APS-24-02) in the subject line to iaqschools@epa.gov **before** the application deadline time and date and **must** include the following:
    i. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
    ii. Description of the issue
    iii. The entire application package in PDF format

Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the **March 19, 2024, at 11:59 PM (ET) application submission deadline** will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

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

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

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement.

Mandatory Documents:

- Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*. Please note that the organizational UEI must be included on the SF-424. Applicants are advised to begin the SAM.gov registration process early so they have an active UEI prior to beginning this step. Otherwise, progress can be delayed on other parts of the application. See Section IV.A. for information on SAM.gov registration.
- Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.*
- EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report.* Helpful tips for completing the form can be found at *www.epa.gov/grants/tips-completing-epa-form-4700-4*.
- EPA Form 5700-54, *Key Contacts Form*.
- Project Narrative Attachment Form, *Project Narrative* – Prepared as described in Section IV.C. below.

Use the "*Other Attachments*" form identified under the Mandatory Documents tab to submit the following:

- Attachment A: Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; note that this will be required if application is selected for funding.
- Attachment B: Partnership Letters: Letters that demonstrate strong, long-term involvement throughout the project from project partners are encouraged, but not required. Letters should specifically indicate how project partners and supporting organizations, including applicable labor organizations, will participate in or directly assist in the design and performance of the project. Letters should also explain how obtaining support from project partners will allow the applicant to more effectively perform the project. Letters should be addressed to the applicant organization and should be included as attachments to the application. Partners should not submit letters directly to EPA.
- Attachment C: Project Team Biographies
- Attachment D: CEJST or EJScreen data, analyses, and results for targeted schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities or if schools and school districts are not already identified details on how CEJST and EJScreen data, analyses, and results will be used to identify schools and school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities that will benefit from funded activities.
- Attachment E: EPA Approval Letter, if applicable, to use alternate means to submit initial application.
- Attachment F: Cost Share Commitment Letter, if applicable.
- **Note:** If the application includes activities in project area 4, the research and demonstration project area, a two-page Scientific Data Management Plan must be submitted after selection and before award.

When saving application files, please ensure that the following characters are ***not*** included in the file names: ~ " # % & * : < > ? / \ { | }. Including these characters can cause problems with application files.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you wish to confirm receipt of your application from EPA (not from Grants.gov), please contact iaqschools@epa.gov within 30 days of the close of this solicitation.

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **March 19, 2024, at 11:59 PM (ET).**

C. Project Narrative Instructions, Format, and Content

Instructions: The project narrative should substantially comply with the instructions, format, and content described below. It should also address the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. The project narrative, including the cover page, workplan, and budget table and detail, must not exceed a maximum of 10 single-spaced typewritten pages. Pages in excess of the 10-page limit will not be reviewed.

Supporting materials, such as project team biographies, partnership letters, CEJST/EJScreen data/analyses/reports, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreements can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 10-page limit. Supporting materials should also be submitted using the Optional Attachments form, as described in Section IV.B. above.

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

Applicants are encouraged, but are not required, to use the project narrative, including cover page, format below.[18]

(1) **Cover Page:**
The cover page should not exceed one page. The cover page should include the following information:

- **Project Title**: one descriptive sentence only
- **Project Scope**: state, multi-state, regional, national
- **Applicant Information**
  - Applicant organization name
  - Applicant organization's eligibility type: state, Tribe, territory, local government/educational agency, nonprofit organization
  - Primary contact name, phone number, and e-mail address
- **Amount of EPA Funding Requested:** See award sizes in Section II.B.
- **Project Period of Performance:** Provide beginning and ending dates of proposed project.
- **Short Project Description:** Briefly describe your project in one to three sentences only, especially noting the project areas covered and the expected outputs and outcomes.

(2) **Workplan:**
Applicants should ensure that the workplan addresses the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. Applicants should use the section and subsection numbers and headings below, which correspond with the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO, to assist reviewers in identifying the information provided. The workplan should be written clearly using understandable terms.

Section 1 – Project Summary and Approach (30 or 40 possible points)

This section should contain a detailed project summary and description of the proposed activities to be undertaken, consistent with Section I.B. "Program Goals and Objectives" of the

18 All example templates included in this NOFO are optional. EPA will not penalize or withhold a benefit from an applicant who provides information in another format.

NOFO. Details of every activity for which the applicant is seeking funding should be included, such as how the activities, outputs, and partnerships (if any) described throughout the application fit together to meet the goals and objectives of this grant program. Evidence should be provided as to why activities are expected to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. Applications in Track B (that address project area 4) will be evaluated on an additional criterion, described below and in Section V.

The application should:

1. Clearly state which project area(s) each proposed activity is associated with. The four project areas are: 1) IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building; 2) Tribal IAQ and GHG Reduction Capacity Building; 3) IAQ and GHG Training[19] and Education Campaign; and 4) IAQ and GHG Reduction Research and Demonstration.

2. Explain why the project areas and proposed activities were selected and provide details on how the activities will complement one another.

3. Provide a high-level overview for each proposed activity that describes the linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan, outputs and outcomes as noted under Section I.D. "Environmental Results and Strategic Plan Information."

4. Clearly describe and provide evidence as to how each activity and its associated output(s) will contribute to achievement of the Program Goals and Objectives detailed in Section I.B. "Program Goals and Objectives." Evidence may consist of 1) peer-reviewed publications; 2) activities consistent with recommended actions in EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit and Framework, Energy Savings Plus Health Guidance, Preventive Maintenance Guidance, and other EPA recommended IAQ best practices;

19 **Tip:** If Job Training Activities are proposed. Job training activities should be focused on preparing individuals for high-quality IAQ jobs in K-12 schools. The U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Commerce have developed eight Good Jobs Principles that applicants are encouraged to review. Applicants proposing job training activities should use high-quality, evidence-based training models, such as: Pre-Apprenticeship Programs with connections to one or more Registered Apprenticeship Programs; Registered Apprenticeship Programs; Joint Labor-Management Training Programs; paid internships; and/or, partnerships with community colleges that award an industry-recognized credential. As this program is focused on benefits for disadvantaged communities, applicants are encouraged to develop programs that create employment opportunities for individuals in disadvantaged communities and address barriers to employment those participants may face. Applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate with workforce development partners, such as labor unions, State Departments of Labor, and/or a State or local workforce boards.

Other job training activities can include developing a diverse, skilled pipeline of professionals who understand IAQ in disadvantaged communities. Accordingly, applicants may use program funds to propose activities that introduce young people from disadvantaged communities to the field of IAQ and engage them to carry out the activities in the grant. Applicants are encouraged to propose models that align with the American Climate Corps (ACC), which is a federal government initiative focused on training young people for high-demand skills for jobs in the clean energy economy. To qualify as an ACC program, the program must provide youth with at least 300 hours of paid skills-based training and/or service.

Applicants are encouraged to partner with organizations that serve young people in disadvantaged communities to recruit participants, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges, Minority Serving Institutions, community colleges, community-based organizations, workforce development programs, or other similar groups. Applicants proposing a program to be considered for the ACC should note that in their application, and applicants should identify compensation for Climate Corps participants in their budget.

and 3) results from similar successful programs/activities executed by the applicant or other organizations.

Tip: EPA will not consider activities that promote the use of air cleaning and energy efficiency technologies of unknown or unclear performance against indoor air pollutants and GHG reductions such as bipolar ionization, ozone generators, ionizing air cleaners, and oxidizing air cleaners.

5. Provide high level details as to how the program activities/outputs will be made easily accessible to K-12 schools and school districts.

6. Provide high level details/evidence as to how their activities will increase state, regional, and/or national systems that address IAQ issues and reduce GHG emissions in K-12 schools and/or school districts.

   Evidence could include: 1) information that proves likelihood that activities will increase awareness of IAQ/GHG issues, solutions, and available resources among K-12 facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers; 2) information that proves likelihood that activities will provide the skills and knowledge necessary for IAQ and GHG reduction program development, enhancement, and implementation among the largest number of K-12 school and/or school district facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers; 3) (for job training programs only) information that proves likelihood of developing new highly skilled K-12 school staff necessary for IAQ program development, enhancement, and implementation in K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities; and 4) applicant information for indicators that prove the likelihood that activities will increase/improve state, regional, and/or national systems that address IAQ issues and reduce GHG emissions in K-12 schools and/or school districts.

7. Only for Track B applications with project area 4 activities (IAQ and GHG Reduction Research and Demonstration): Provide details on the quality of the research and demonstration project design and likelihood that it will provide useful/actionable IAQ data and findings that K-12 school and/or school district facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers can incorporate into their comprehensive IAQ management plans and programs.

Note: Applications proposing activities in project areas 1-3 are considered "Track A" and can receive a max of 30 points for this section. Applicants proposing project area 4 and activities under at least one of project areas 1-3 are considered "Track B" can receive a max of 40 points for this section. EPA will make selections from top applications in Track A and from top applications in Track B.

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

Section 2 – Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures (20 possible points)

a. **Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes** (10 possible points)
Applicants should identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the project as defined in Section I.D. of the NOFO. Specific outputs and outcomes should be provided and may include short- and longer-term activities. In addition to a narrative discussion of the outputs and outcomes, the applicant is encouraged to include a table such as the example on this page:

Example of an Output and Outcome Table[20]

Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes	
Outputs	***Outcome(s)***
Project 1: IAQ Capacity Building Hosting national IAQ conferences for facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers from K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities.	Expanded state, regional, and national networks of IAQ professionals dedicated to improving IAQ in schools through the adoption of comprehensive IAQ management plans and programs consistent with EPA's IAQ best practices. Quantitative Measure(s): • X Number of conference attendees to show participation and NCES number for each school/school district they come from to show geographic reach • X Number of conference attendees who plan to update or develop and then implement a comprehensive IAQ plan at their school/school district based upon conference learnings • X Number and size of IAQ organizations or networks that conference participants are members of • Participant conference rating (1-10) (goal is an average of X or better) • Media coverage of conferences (Goal is X stories seen by Y viewers) Qualitative Measure(s): • Sentiment associated with the media coverage of conferences X-Y (negative to positive)
Project X: Title TBD activity	Outcome A Quantitative Measure(s): • TBD Qualitative Measure(s): • TBD
	Outcome B Quantitative Measure(s): • TBD Qualitative Measure(s): • TBD

20 **Disclaimer:** EPA will not penalize or withhold a benefit from any applicant that submits outputs and outcomes information in another format.

Tip: Please consider providing specific goals with numbers and measures for as many outcomes as possible/appropriate. Goals with specific numbers and measures make it easier for application reviewers to assess the potential impact(s) of the proposed activities.

Output and Outcome Table Note: In order to avoid creating a perception that EPA is looking for specific outcomes for Project 1 activities, placeholders for numbers like X and Y were used instead.

b. Performance Measures and Plan (5 possible points)
Applicants should describe the proposed qualitative and quantitative performance measures, which will be the mechanism to track, measure, and report progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Applicants should describe their plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated, as described in Section I.D. of the NOFO and Section 3.a. of the workplan.

These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful processes and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. description of performance measures will directly relate to the project's outputs and outcomes (see Section I.D.), including but not limited to:

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

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

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the project will achieve?
- How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?
- What are the expected locations of the K-12 schools or school districts of the outputs and outcomes?

Tip: Providing the NCES ID number for each school or school district (if known at the time of application) is recommended. If the NCES ID number for each school or school district is not known at the time of application submission, applicants may want to consider collecting that information as part of their plan.

c. Timeline and Milestones (5 possible points)

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

Section 3 – Environmental Justice and Low-Income, Disadvantaged, and Tribal Communities (20 possible points)

a. Tribal K-12 Schools: (5 possible points)

Applications should provide details on how the proposed project/activities will benefit K-12 schools, and their Tribal communities, that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community.

b. K-12 Schools in Low-income and Disadvantaged Communities (5 possible points)

Applications should provide details on how the proposed project/activities will benefit K-12 schools and/or school districts, and their low-income and disadvantaged communities, that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community.

c. Impact Assessment (5 possible points)

Applicants should detail how they will assess, quantify, and report on benefits and avoided disbenefits to K-12 schools, school districts, and nearby low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities throughout the grant period.

d. Community Engagement (5 possible points)

In addition to the information included under 3.a-c. above, applicants should describe the quality and extent to which the project addresses engagement with these affected communities and/or populations, especially local residents (as appropriate), to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; how the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; how community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and how decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Applicants should provide a qualitative discussion of 1) how input from K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities has been incorporated into this application and 2) how meaningful engagement with K-12 schools and/or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities will be continuously included in the development and implementation of this project throughout the life of this grant.

Applicants should also specify how they plan to ensure early and consistent inclusion of various linguistic, cultural, institutional, geographic, and other perspectives throughout project development and implementation.

Examples of meaningful community involvement could include, but are not limited to:

- Developing an outreach and engagement strategy; promoting the use of a wide variety of techniques to create early, frequent, and continuing opportunities for community engagement;
- Creating a transparent planning process that also provides opportunity for early risk mitigation;
- Holding community consultations or public input meetings;
- Providing a publicly accessible list of all upcoming community engagement opportunities (e.g., listening sessions, outreach, questions and answers sessions, door-to-door visits, and community meetings);
- Creating a community work group or advisory board made up of community members;
- Having a community-elected member(s) on the planning and project team; and/or
- Getting community feedback on local benefits and prioritizing what they value most.

Partnership letter(s) should be included in the application as an attachment if applicable, which do not count toward the 10-page project narrative page limit; see Section IV.C. of the NOFO. These partnership letters should describe the partner's support for and involvement with the project.

Additional Guidance

Applicants should use the definition of low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities as provided in Section I.C. Only communities qualifying as disadvantaged communities according to this NOFO and the benefits associated with those communities will be considered under this evaluation criterion. The application should also thoroughly describe any anticipated negative impacts to disadvantaged communities and concrete strategies for mitigating those risks.

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, K-12 schools and school districts benefitting from this funding should be A) located in a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community or 2) have 50% (or more) of the served student population residing in a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community.

A community is defined as "either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a geographically dispersed set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions. In addition, for disadvantaged communities that are geographically defined, "low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities" means a geographic area meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Any census tract that is included as disadvantaged in V 1.0 of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).[21]
2. Any census block group that is at or above the 90th percentile for any of V 2.2 of EJScreen's supplemental indexes when compared to the nation or state.[22]
3. Any census block group which scores at or above the 90th percentile for low-income in V 2.2 of EJScreen.
4. Any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in V 2.2 of EJScreen.[23]
5. Any K-12 school or school district located outside of a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community that serves a student population of 50% or more residing in a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community identified by criteria 1-4 in this section.[24]

NOTE: Applicants should prioritize K-12 schools and school districts in communities identified by criteria 1-4 above.

Applications that propose projects that target specific K-12 schools or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal communities should provide CEJST and/or EJSCREEN data for the census tract in which each facility is located. Applications may also include data for nearby census tract(s) which are served by the targeted schools or school districts and explain how the additional census tracts are served by the facility or facilities (e.g., school boundary encompasses multiple census tracts). If an application proposes projects that will target K-12 schools or school districts in low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal communities, but does not have specific schools or school districts pre-selected, they should provide details on how they will ensure K-12 schools and/or school districts that are located in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities will be targeted and benefit from those projects/activities.

For proposed projects/activities that do not target specific facilities, such as outreach and training, applications should demonstrate that the proposed target population belongs to or is expected to serve a K-12 school or school district in a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community.

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21 CEJST has an interactive map and uses datasets that are environmental and socioeconomic indicators of burdens. Percentiles show how much burden each Census tract experiences compared to other tracts. To qualify as a disadvantaged community in the CEJST, one of the burden indicators must be above the 90th percentile. In addition, lands within the boundaries of Federally Recognized Tribes are also considered to be disadvantaged communities.

22 EJScreen is the EPA's environmental justice mapping and screening tool that uses national datasets for environmental and socioeconomic indicators to show how a selected area compares to the state, the EPA region, or the nation. EJScreen operates at a finer geographic scale of Census block groups than the CEJST, allowing EJScreen Supplemental Indexes to identify smaller areas that may be disadvantaged within a larger non-disadvantaged area. To identify areas in EJScreen that meet one of the above definitions of a disadvantaged community, applicants should use the "Supplemental Indices" option under the tool's map layers.

23 As set forth in M-23-09, the Addendum to the Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative, M-21-28, on using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), "all Federally Recognized Tribal entities are considered disadvantaged communities for the purposes of the Justice40 Initiative." The CEJST uses the Bureau of Indian Affairs Land Area Representation dataset to depict American Indian land areas for Federally Recognized Tribes. The Tribal Lands category in EJScreen to use for this purpose includes Alaska Native Allotments (EPA Metadata Record), Alaska Native Villages (EPA Metadata Record), American Indian Reservations (EPA Metadata Record), American Indian Off-reservation Trust Lands (EPA Metadata Record), and Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas (EPA Metadata Record).

24 Students who attend K-12 schools are a geographically dispersed population. This means that students from disadvantaged, low-income, and/or Tribal communities could be attending a school that is located outside of a CEJST and/or EJScreen identified low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal community boundary (based on census tract data which does not always align well with school and school district boundaries). Criteria 5 is designed to help address this mapping challenge by helping ensure that more of the benefits from activities funded by this grant opportunity will be delivered to a greater number of students who live in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.

Furthermore, applications should clearly identify a plan and process for continuing to assess, quantify, and report benefits and avoided disbenefits to these K-12 schools, school districts, and nearby low-income, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities throughout the grant period.

Any data, analyses, and results from EJScreen and/or CEJST included as an attachment will not count towards the project narrative 10-page limit; see Section IV.C. for more information.

Section 4 – Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (15 possible points)

a. **Past Performance** (5 possible points)
Submit a list of up to five federally funded assistance agreements that the applicant is performing or has performed within the last three years. Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts. These assistance agreements should be awards directly to the applicant. For each of the agreements, include:

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

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

NOTE: 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 of 3 for these factors, which is half of the total points available for these sub-criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, a score of 0 for these factors may be received.

b. **Reporting Requirements** (5 possible points)
For each of the assistance agreements listed, the applicant should describe their history of meeting the reporting requirements under the agreement(s). This should include:
- Whether the applicant submitted acceptable final reports under those agreements;
- The extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on its progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements; and
- If progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not.

Note: In evaluating applicants under the past performance factors in Section V.A. and B. of the NOFO, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score of 3 for these factors, which is half of the total points available for these sub-criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, a score of 0 for these factors may be received.

c. Staff Expertise (5 possible points)

Include information on the applicant's organization, including a description of the staff's knowledge, expertise, qualifications, experience working with Tribes (if any), and resources and/or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the proposed project's goals. Biographical sketches, including resumes or curriculum vitae for key staff, managers and any other key personnel may be included as an optional project team biography attachment, as listed in Section IV.A. of the NOFO; the optional attachment does not count towards the 10-page limit of the project narrative.

Section 5 – Project Sustainability (5 possible points)

Applicants should provide details on the extent to which the project results and benefits are sustainable (most likely to be continued) after project completion.

Section 6 – Budget (15 possible points)

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

Cost Sharing/Matching Funds and Leveraged Resources: Cost sharing/matching and leveraged resources are not required under this NOFO (see Section III.B.). However, for applications that voluntarily include cost sharing/matching funds, the cost share/match will be evaluated as part of the budget evaluation criterion in Section V. For applications that include non-cost share leveraged resources in their applications, the leveraged resources will not be evaluated. For that reason, applicants should be aware of the differences between proposed cost sharing/matching and leveraged resources.

Applicants who propose to use a cost share must include the costs or contributions for the cost share in the project budget on the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget detail described later in this section. If a proposed cost share is to be provided by a named third-party/parties and not the applicant, a Cost Share Commitment Letter(s) must be attached to the application as described in Section IV.C. of the NOFO, which does not count towards the 10-page project narrative page limit. The budget detail described under this section must clearly specify the amount of federal funding and the cost share amount for each category of total project costs. **The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed cost share that is included in the approved project budget.**

If an applicant proposes to provide other leveraged resources, such resources should not be included in the project budget on the SF-424 or SF-424A. Leveraged resources should only be described in the applicant's project narrative. The applicant should demonstrate how it will leverage additional funds/resources beyond the federal grant funds awarded to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate.

If the proposed cost sharing/matching or leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action authorized under 2 CFR Part 200.

a. Budget Detail (5 possible points)

Applicants should consult EPA's Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance.

Applicants should provide a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds. Applicants should use the instructions, budget object class descriptions, and provide a table of budget expenses to complete the detailed budget section of the project narrative; an example of a possible budget table is shown below for reference.[25] The budget detail and the budget table (that summarize the proposed budget) should be included in the project narrative and count towards the maximum 10-page limit. Additional budget documents, excluding the SF-424 and SF-424A forms, or project narratives pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed, as listed in Section III.C. of the NOFO. Applicants should include applicable rows of costs for each budget category in their budget table to accurately reflect the proposed project budget. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, installation or labor supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs (i.e., subawards, participant support costs), indirect costs, and total costs. If providing a cost share, the budget detail must clearly specify the amount of

25 **Disclaimer:** EPA will not penalize or withhold a benefit from any applicant that submits budget summary information in another format.

federal funding and the cost share amount for each category. For applicants proposing to implement a participant support cost or rebate program, the rebates are appropriately listed under the "Other" budget category as "Participant Support Costs." See RAIN-2018-G05-R1, "EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs" for more information on participant support costs.

- **Personnel – List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.** This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (paid employees of the applicant organization as reflected in payroll tax records). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost-share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of contractors (including individual consultants), which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards or non-employee program participants (e.g., interns or volunteers), which are included in the "Other" category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization's negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.

- **Fringe Benefits – Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included**. Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits may include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment benefit plans. If the applicant's fringe rate does not include the cost of leave, and the applicant intends to charge leave to the agreement, it must provide supplemental information describing its proposed method(s) for determining and equitably distributing these costs.

- **Travel – Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-state and out-of-state, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.** Travel must be: integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g., inspections); related to proposed project activities (e.g., attendance at meetings); or to a technical training or workshop that supports effective implementation of the project activities. Only include travel costs for employees in the travel category. Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of contractors (including consultants), which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards and non-employee program participants (e.g., trainees), which are included in the "Other" category. Further, travel does not include bus rentals for group trips, which would be covered under the contractual category. Finally, if the applicant intends to use any funds for travel outside the United States, it must be specifically identified. All proposed foreign travel must be approved by EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs prior to being taken.

- **Equipment – Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.** Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts that are not included in the purchase price for the equipment. These types of proposed costs should be included in the "Other" category. Items with a unit cost of less than $5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.1, "Equipment." The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project. If installation costs are included in the equipment costs, labor expenses shall be itemized with the detailed number of hours charged and the hourly wage. If the applicant has written procurement procedures that define a threshold for equipment costs that is lower than $5,000, then that threshold takes precedence.

- **Supplies – "Supplies" means all tangible personal property other than "equipment."** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the "Other" category.

- **Contractual – Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual services (including consultant services) are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. EPA's Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions has detailed guidance available for differentiating between contractors and subrecipients. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the "Other" category. **EPA does not require nor encourage applicants to identify specific contractors**. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the anticipated scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known. Any proposed non-competed/sole-source contracts in excess of $3,500 must include a justification. Note that it is unlikely that EPA will accept proposed sole source contracts for goods and services (e.g., consulting) that are widely available in the commercial market. Refer to EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements for EPA's policies on competitive procurements and encouraging the use of small and disadvantaged business enterprises.

- **Other – List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance; rental/lease of equipment or supplies; equipment service or maintenance contracts; printing or photocopying; participant support costs such as non-employee training stipends and travel, subsidies or rebates for purchases of pollution control equipment (such as a specified amount of funding for residential woodstove changeouts or

truck owners to purchase cleaner trucks); and subaward costs. Applicants should describe the items included in the "Other" category and include the estimated amount of participant support costs in a separate line item. Additional information about participant support costs is contained in RAIN-2018-G05-R1, "EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs."

- **Subawards** (e.g., subgrants) and participant support costs are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term "subaward" means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient even if the agreement is referred to as a contract. Rebates, subsidies, and similar one-time, lump-sum payments to program beneficiaries for purchase of eligible emission control technologies are considered participant support costs. Please refer to the grant subaward policy guide for detailed guidance on funding projects and partnerships and how to correctly categorize these costs in the workplan budget. "Other" does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work as a separate line item in the "Other" category, and a description of the types of activities to be supported. **EPA does not require nor encourage applicants to identify specific subaward recipients**.

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

  Additional indirect cost guidance is available in RAIN-2018-G02-R, "Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements."

Example Budget Table

Line Item & Itemized Cost	EPA Funding[26]
(1) Project Manager @ $40/hr x 10 hrs/wk x 208 wks	$83,200
(2) Project Staff @ $30/hr x 40 hrs/wk x 208 wks	$249,600
TOTAL PERSONNEL	$332,800
20% of Salary and Wages @ 20% x Total Personnel - Retirement, Health Benefits, FICA, SUI	$66,560
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	$66,560
Mileage for PM: 25 miles/wk @ $.17/mi x 208 wks	$884
Mileage for Staff: 50 mi/wk @ $.17/mi x 208 wks	$1,768
TOTAL TRAVEL	$2,652
10 Electric Trucks and Charging Equipment Owned by the Applicant @ $360,000/unit	$3,600,000
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	$3,600,000
Outreach Materials and Supplies	$10,000
TOTAL SUPPLIES	$10,000
Charging Equipment Installation	$55,000
TOTAL CONTRACTUAL	$55,000
Subaward/subgrant to School District for 50% of 10 Electric	$2,100,000
Type C Buses @ $420,000/unit plus $32,000 in personnel costs	$32,000
Participant Support Costs/Rebates for 50% 100 Woodstove Changeouts ($4,400 per Pellet Stove @ 50% x 100)	$220,000
TOTAL OTHER	$2,352,000
(Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate = 20%)	
Federal Indirect Cost Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs	$66,560
TOTAL INDIRECT	$66,560
TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED	**$6,485,572**

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

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

b. Expenditure of Awarded Funds (5 possible points)

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

c. Reasonableness of Costs (5 possible points)

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

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

For applicants that have proposed a cost share or provide other leveraged additional funding as described in Section III.B. of the NOFO and Section 6 above, the budget narrative must include a detailed description of how the applicant will obtain the cost share and leveraged resources and how the cost share funding and/or other leveraged resources will be used. The proposed cost share included in the budget detail must also be included on the SF-424 and SF-424A. Other leveraged resource information should not be included in the SF-424 or SF-424A.

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

Section 7 – Attachments (As listed in Section IV.A of the NOFO; this information does not count towards the project narrative 10-page limit):

Scientific Data Management Plan: Required for IAQ Research and Demonstration Projects only, should be no more than 2 pages. Applications submitted in response to project area 4 of this solicitation that are selected will be required to a Scientific Data Management Plan (SDMP) that addresses public access to EPA-funded scientific research data -after selection, but before award- by including the information below: (1) If the proposed research described in the application is expected to result in the generation of scientific research data, the application must include an SDMP of up to two single-spaced pages (this is in addition to any application page limits described in Section IV of this solicitation that apply to other parts of the application package) describing plans for providing long-term preservation of, and public access to, the scientific research data and accompanying metadata created and/or collected under the award (including data generated under subawards and contracts) funded in whole or in part by EPA.

The SDMP should indicate that recipients will make accessible, at a minimum, scientific research data and associated metadata underlying their scientific research journal publications funded in whole or in part by EPA. SDMPs should reflect relevant standards and community best practices for data and metadata and make use of community-accepted repositories whenever practicable. The contents of the SDMP (or absence thereof) will be considered as part of the application review process for selected applicants as described in Section V.B and must be deemed acceptable for the applicant to receive an award. The SDMP should include the following elements (Note: If any of the items listed below do not apply, please explain why):

- **i.** Types of scientific research data and metadata expected to be generated and/or collected under the award.
- **ii.** The location where the data will be publicly accessible.
- **iii.** The standards to be used for data/metadata format and content.
- **iv.** Policies for accessing and sharing data including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, security, intellectual property, and other rights or requirements consistent with applicable laws, regulations, rules, and policies.
- **v.** Plans for digital data storage, archiving, and long-term preservation that address the relative value of long-term preservation and access along with the associated costs and administrative burden.
- **vi.** Description of how data accessibility and preservation will enable validation of published results or how such results could be validated if data are not shared or preserved.
- **vii.** Roles and responsibilities for ensuring SDMP implementation and management (including contingency plans in case key personnel leave the project).
- **viii.** Resources and capabilities (equipment, connections, systems, software, expertise, etc.) requested in the research application that are needed to meet the stated goals for accessibility and preservation (reference can be made to the relevant section of the research application's budget justification).
- **ix.** If appropriate, an explanation as to why data accessibility and/or preservation are not possible. If the proposed research is not expected to result in the generation of scientific research data, provide the following statement (not subject to any application page limits described in Section IV of this solicitation) in your application as the SDMP: The proposed research is not expected to result in the generation of scientific research data. If scientific research data are generated after award, the recipient agrees to update the statement by providing EPA with a revised SDMP (see content of SDMP described above) describing how scientific research data and accompanying metadata created and/or collected under the award (including data generated under subawards and contracts) will be preserved and, as appropriate, made publicly accessible.

Cost Share Commitment Letter(s): If applicable, project partners or third-parties providing in-kind or monetary assistance must demonstrate their specific commitment to meet the proposed cost share funds and/or other leveraged resources by submitting cost share commitment letters. Letters should be addressed to the applicant organization and included as

attachments to the application. Please do not ask partners to submit letters directly to EPA. The letters should be referenced under Section 6 "Cost Share and Leveraging" in the workplan.

Project Team Biographies: Optional. Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for key staff, managers, and any other key personnel. If submitted, this should be referenced under Section 4.C. "Programmatic Capability and Past Performance" in the workplan.

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

Partnership Letters: If applicable, letters of support that demonstrate strong, long-term involvement throughout the project from a variety of project partners (especially with Tribes) are encouraged. Letters should specifically indicate how project partners and supporting organizations will participate in or directly assist in the design and performance of the project, or how obtaining support from project partners will allow the applicant to more effectively perform the project. Letters should be addressed to the applicant organization and included as attachments to the application. Please do not ask partners to submit letters directly to EPA.

D. Coalition Coverage

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this NOFO; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subrecipients of the recipient (the "pass-through entity"). Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR 200.1 and comply with EPA's Subaward Policy. The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 CFR 200.332, subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for proper use of EPA funding. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards under this grant program but may receive procurement contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 CFR 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants. Refer to the Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. **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.**

E. Releasing Copies of Applications

In concert with EPA's commitment to conducting business in an open and transparent manner, copies of applications submitted under this NOFO may be made publicly available on the grant

program website or other public website for a period of time after the selected applications are announced. EPA recommends that applications not include trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is confidential or privileged, or sensitive information, if disclosed, that would invade another individual's personal privacy (e.g., an individual's salary, personal email addresses, etc.). However, if such information is included, it will be treated in accordance with 40 CFR § 2.203. (Review EPA clause IV.a., Confidential Business Information, under EPA Solicitation Clauses.)

Clearly indicate which portion(s) of the application you are claiming as confidential, privileged, or sensitive information, or state 'n/a' or 'not applicable' if the application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information. As provided at 40 CFR § 2.203(b) if no claim of confidential treatment accompanies the information when it is received by EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the submitter.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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

Only eligible entities whose application(s) meet the threshold criteria in Section III.C. of this NOFO will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative, following the content requirements set forth in Section IV.** Each application will be rated using a point system. Track A applications, which address combinations of project areas 1-3 will be evaluated based on a total of 105 points possible. Track B applications, which include project area 4 in their proposal, will be evaluated based on a total of 115 points possible. Track A and B applications will be ranked separately.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria for All Applications	Points
Total Possible Points	**105 (A)/115(B)**
1. Project Summary and Approach: Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applications based on the extent and quality of the applicant's project summary, overall approach, and need for funding. Specifically, EPA will evaluate applications based upon how the proposed activities (in two or more of the four project areas from Section I.B.) provide the most/best IAQ monitoring and improvements and GHG monitoring and reductions for K-12 schools and school districts located in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities using the following criteria (as appropriate): Tracks A & B	**30(A)/40(B)**

Criteria for All Applications	Points
A. (15 points): The highest likely number of comprehensive IAQ plans that K-12 schools and/or school districts develop or enhance and adopt as a result of the proposed activities. **B. (5 points):** Ability for schools, school districts, or states/territories/Tribes to access grant activity benefits and adopt, replicate, enhance, or institute similar IAQ plans, policies, and programs. **C. (10 points):** Highest likelihood of increased and/or improved of state, regional, and/or national systems/capacity to address IAQ issues and reduce GHG emissions in K-12 schools and/or school districts. <u>Track B applications only</u> **D. (10 points):** Quality of research and demonstration project design and likelihood of providing useful/actionable IAQ data and findings that K-12 school and/or school district facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers can incorporate into their comprehensive IAQ management plans and programs.	
<u>2. Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes and Performance Measures</u>: Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate: **A. (10 points)** The extent and quality to which the applicant identifies and proposes outputs and outcomes, as described in Section I.C of this announcement. **B. (5 points)** The quality of the proposed quantitative and qualitative performance measures and effectiveness of the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I.C of this announcement. **C. (5 points)** The reasonableness of the proposed timeline including key milestones for specific tasks and the likelihood of completion of the project's goals and objectives by project end.	**20**
<u>3. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:	**15**

Criteria for All Applications	Points
A. (5 points) Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in Section IV.C of the announcement. **B. (5 points)** History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in Section IV.C. of the announcement, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not. **C. (5 points)** Organizational experience, including staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, and experience working with low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal schools, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. **Note:** In evaluating applicants under items A. and B. of this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score of 3 for sub-criteria A. and B. (a neutral score is 1.5 points or half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these sub-criteria.	
4. Environmental Justice, Low-Income, Disadvantaged, and Tribal Communities Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applications based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will address the disproportionate and adverse (see below) human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect communities, including affected low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities, described in Section I of this solicitation. As part of this evaluation, applications will be evaluated based on:	**20**

Criteria for All Applications	Points
A. (5 points) How effectively the project will benefit K-12 schools and/or school districts, and their Tribal communities, that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community; **B. (5 points)** How effectively the project will benefit K-12 schools and/or school districts, and their low-income and disadvantaged communities, that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community; **C. (5 points)** How effectively the project will assess, quantify, and report on benefits and avoided disbenefits to K-12 schools, school districts, and nearby low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities throughout the grant period; and **D. (5 points)** The extent to which the project addresses engagement with these affected low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities and/or populations (see A above), especially local residents and school/school district officials responsible for developing and adopting comprehensive IAQ plans (facility management staff, health officers, and key decision makers), to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project. Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens and/or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect or have affected the low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities described in this solicitation. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions. Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include: differential proximity and exposure to adverse environmental hazards; greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to causes such as age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or limited access to quality nutrition); unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (for example, subsistence fishing or farming); cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes (due to	

Criteria for All Applications	Points
causes such as lack of or ineffective language access programs, lack of programs to make processes accessible to persons with disabilities, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources); and degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.	
5. Project Sustainability: Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent to which the project results and benefits are sustainable and are most likely to be continued after project completion.	**5**
6. Budget: Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent and quality to which: **A. (5 points)** The proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type in the proper budget category for each activity the applicant is requesting funding. **B. (5 points)** The proposed costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes; and **C. (5 points)** The applicant's approach, procedures, and controls will ensure that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.	**15**

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold eligibility factors listed in Section III.C. of this NOFO. Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the applicable evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA evaluation team. Each application will be given a numerical score and will be rank ordered by the review panel. Track A applications will be ranked separately from Track B applications. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the EPA Headquarters selection official based on these reviews and rankings. Final funding decisions will be made by the EPA Headquarters selection official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendations of the EPA evaluation team and the other factors listed in Section V.C. below. The EPA Headquarters selection official plans to make selections from top ranked applications from Track A and Track B.

C. Other Factors

In making the final funding decisions, the EPA Headquarters selection official may also consider programmatic priorities, geographic diversity of funds, and applicant's prior experience working

with K-12 schools and/or school districts and Tribal entities. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA award official.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

EPA anticipates it will announce selection decisions in May 2024 and tentatively plans to issue awards in October 2024.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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

A. Award Notices

EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via telephone, electronic or postal mail by EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, Office of Radiation and Indoor Air. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that their application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan, quality assurance project plan, etc.), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

B. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required.

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

Performance Measures. The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful processes and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. It is expected that the description of performance measures will directly relate to the project outcomes and outputs (see Section I.B.). The description of the performance measures will directly relate to the project's outcomes and outputs, including but not limited to:

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

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

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the project will achieve?
- How does the performance plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?
- What are the expected locations (such as census tracts or school districts) of the outputs and outcomes?

C. Build America, Buy America (BABA) Requirements

Research and demonstration project activities under this competition will be subject to the domestic content sourcing requirements under the Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (P.L. 117-58, §§70911-70917). These provisions apply when using funds for the purchase of goods, products, and materials on any form of construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. BABA requires that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to federally funded infrastructure projects must be produced in the United States. The recipient must implement these requirements in their procurements, and this article must flow down to all subawards and contracts at any tier. For legal definitions and sourcing requirements, the recipient must consult EPA's Build America, Buy America website. Applicants should consider BABA requirements when preparing budget information.

Research and demonstration project activities that use funding provided through this grant to purchase goods, products, and materials for any form of construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure (aka school facilities) are subject to the requirements of BABA, which requires applicants to comply with Buy America preference requirements or apply for a waiver for each infrastructure project. The following potentially eligible projects under this

competition meet the definition of "infrastructure" and are subject to Buy America preference requirements under BABA:

- Any research and demonstration project area activity that uses funding provided through this grant to purchase permanently affixed goods, products, and materials for any form of construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of school facilities will be subject to BABA.
- Any other permanent public structure that meets the infrastructure definition in M-24-02.

Tip: IAQ Capacity Building, Tribal IAQ Capacity Building, IAQ Education, and IAQ Training projects funded through this grant opportunity are not considered "infrastructure" projects.

When supported by rationale provided in IIJA §70914, the recipient may submit a waiver to EPA. The recipient should request guidance on the submission instructions of an EPA waiver request from the EPA Project Officer. A list of approved EPA waivers is available on the Build America, Buy America website.

In addition to BABA requirements, all procurements under grants may be subject to the domestic preference provisions of 2 CFR §200.322.

See "Build America, Buy America" clause in EPA Solicitation Clauses.

D. FOR IAQ Research and Demonstration Projects selected for award ONLY – Scientific Data Management Plan (SDMP)

EPA will evaluate the merits of the SDMPs for IAQ Research and Demonstration applications recommended for award. The SDMPs for those applications not recommended for award will not be reviewed.

The SDMPs of all applications recommended for award will be evaluated to ensure they are appropriate and adequate (e.g., that they describe the types of scientific research data and metadata to be collected and/or generated under the proposed research award and include plans for providing long-term preservation of, and public access to, the scientific research data and metadata). SDMPs that indicate the proposed research will not result in the generation and/or collection of scientific research data will also be evaluated to ensure the proposed research will not result in the generation and/or collection of scientific research data and therefore not require a more comprehensive SDMP. Applicants may be contacted regarding their SDMP if additional information is needed or if revisions are required prior to award. If upon review of the SDMP, EPA identifies any issues with the plan, EPA will raise these issues to the applicant, so they may be addressed. Applicants with an unsatisfactory SDMP will not receive an award.

SDMP Process Tip: To reduce applicant burden, the two-page SDMPs are only required to be prepared by and submitted by applicants that are selected for award. SDMPs are not required

when applicants submit their application. Development and submission of SDMPs to EPA will occur after applicants are selected and the SDMP must be approved by EPA prior to selected applicants receive their award (aka grant funding).

VII. CONTACT INFORMATION

Further information, if needed, may be obtained from the EPA contact(s) indicated below. Information regarding this NOFO obtained from sources other than this Agency Contact may not be accurate. Email inquiries are preferred.

Contact: iaqschools@epa.gov

Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the OAR Grants/Funding webpage: http://www.epa.gov/grants/air-grants-and-funding.