**AGENCY:** **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

**TITLE:** **Gulf of Mexico Program Cooperative Agreements 2018**

**ACTION:** **Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**RFP NUMBER:** **EPA-GM-Cooperative-Agreements-2018-1**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.475**

**DATES:** Proposal packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov) no later than July 31st at 11:59 pm ET in order to be considered for funding.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program is soliciting proposals under this announcement from eligible entities that address water quality improvement; coastal habitat and ecosystems enhancement, restoration and/or protection; environmental education and outreach; and community resilience in the Gulf of Mexico region and its watersheds. Proposals must fully describe the scope of the project, budget and environmental results. Criteria, as described in Section V, will be used to evaluate eligible proposals.

**FUNDING/AWARDS:** The total amount anticipated to be awarded under this announcement is approximately $5 million. EPA anticipates awarding approximately 12 cooperative agreements from this announcement, subject to availability of funds, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations.

**Tentative Timeline**

| | |
|---|---|
| June 1st | RFP Posted |
| June 1st | Please review the Q&A posted at https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico before submitting questions. If the answer needed is not already included in the Q&A, please submit questions to GMP-RFP@epa.gov. Q&A will be updated weekly if new questions are received. |
| July 31st | Proposals Due to the Gulf of Mexico Program by 11:59pm ET |
| Early October | Selected applicants notified. |
| Late November | Final application packages submitted to EPA. |
| Late February | Final awards made. |

***The above lines (other than the proposal submission date) are anticipated dates and subject to change.***

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## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

**A. Background.** The Gulf of Mexico Program (GMP) is a non-regulatory program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) founded to facilitate collaborative actions to protect, maintain, and restore the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico in ways consistent with the economic well-being of the Region. To carry out its mission, GMP continues to maintain and expand partnerships with State and Federal agencies, Federally recognized Tribes, local governments and authorities, academia, regional business and industry, agricultural and environmental organizations, and individual citizens and communities. For more examples of projects funded through previous GMP RFPs, please see the map at the bottom of our webpage, **https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico.**

**B. Scope of Work.** EPA is seeking technically sound proposals to improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico watershed. Proposals should achieve measurable improvement, quantitatively define environmental results, and provide timeframes for achieving those results.

Under this solicitation, the EPA will only consider funding projects that support one (or more) of the following four priority areas:

- water quality improvement (measured by obtaining a minimum of 5% improvement in at least one water quality parameter);
- protect, enhance, and/or restore habitat (measured in number of acres restored or protected);
- environmental education and outreach (measured by # of expected audience(s) and/or individuals served); and
- community resilience (measured by resulting # of communities with improved resiliency)

On the title page, the applicant must declare which priority area the project should be evaluated under and identify any secondary priority areas that are included.

In addition, the project's place of performance must be in the Gulf of Mexico region (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida) and its watersheds, including their out-of-geographic region contributory watersheds.

**The project must address one or more of the priority areas listed below and demonstrate how it will result in meeting an output, as described below.**

***Priority Area I: Water Quality Improvement***

**The following output must be included in projects addressing this priority:**
Demonstrate a minimum 5% improvement in at least one water quality parameter in a water body and/or segment by the end of the project period as compared to the initial project baseline. Examples of water quality parameters that could be demonstrated in a water quality improvement project include but are not limited to: dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity, fecal indicator bacteria, excess nutrients, temperature, and garbage/trash (e.g. trash traps; cleanups coupled with prevention outreach; demonstration or implementation of innovative or creative prevention methods).

**Activities:**
GMP seeks to fund projects to improve water quality in a water body and/or segment. Please identify the eight-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) in which activities will occur. For more information on HUC identification see: https://enviroatlas.epa.gov/enviroatlas/InteractiveMapEntrance/InteractiveMap/index.html. Zoom to your location, click on Boundaries and Natural Features tab, select Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) Boundaries and labels, expand Hydrologic Unit Code, and select HUC 8.

- These projects must include at least one of the following: demonstration/implementation of an innovative technique, methodology or approach that improves water quality in receiving/downstream waters; green practices at schools/colleges and public facilities/spaces; source tracking techniques that lead to partnership based source reduction; improved and innovative community wastewater solutions; and/or locally driven pollution control practices.
- Projects are encouraged to take advantage of currently existing baseline water quality data to provide efficiency in measuring water quality improvement and currently existing watershed plans (i.e. National Estuary Program, Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, or other existing watershed management plans.
- Partnerships are encouraged to increase efficiency of practices to improve water quality.
- Partnerships are encouraged between local, state, and federal agencies; business and industry; nongovernmental organizations; and private landowners to identify critical areas in the region where on-the-ground efforts will produce visible results.

*Under the Water Quality Improvement Priority Area, budgets may not exceed $800,000. Anticipated results should align with the funding level requested.*

***Priority Area II: Protect, Enhance or Restore Habitat***

**The following output must be included in any project addressing this priority:**
Estimate the expected number of habitat acres that will be enhanced, restored and/or protected and provide a report at the end of project period of the actual number of acres enhanced, restored, and/or protected.

**Activities:** GMP seeks to fund projects that protect, enhance and/or restore Gulf habitat (including collaboration with private landowners).

- These projects must include the following: New and innovative techniques, approaches, or methodologies to increase efficiency of cost per habitat acre(s) measured; coastal prairie restoration or enhancement; restoration or protection of wildlife corridors; partner easements; controlled burning; community habitat planting/restoration; riparian zone improvement; greenway/blueway; development and/or innovative/new implementation of an invasive eradication plan to eliminate threats to habitat; and/or other innovative habitat ideas.
- Projects are encouraged to take advantage of existing habitat restoration and management plans (i.e. National Estuary Program CCMP, Land Trust, Tribal).

*Under the Protect Enhance or Restore Habitat Priority Area, budgets may not exceed $500,000. Anticipated results should align with the funding level requested.*

***Priority Area III: Environmental Education and Outreach***

**The following output must be included in any environmental education project:**
An estimate of the number of expected audience(s) and/or individuals to be served. Track and report the actual number of individuals reached and the method(s) used to reach them as a result of the project**.**

**Activities:** GMP seeks to fund projects to develop or improve existing environmental education and outreach programs that build stewardship as it relates to improving water quality; protecting, enhancing or restoring habitat; and/or promoting smart growth practices. The projects are encouraged to target underserved and underrepresented populations within the Gulf of Mexico watershed. Below is a project example, but many types of projects are allowed:

- Foster integrated approaches to restoring water quality, habitats, and ecosystems by engaging K-12 students to identify and implement best management practices and utilize citizen science/volunteer monitoring to track environmental results.

*Under the Environmental Education and Outreach Priority Area, budgets may not exceed $200,000. Anticipated results should align with the funding level requested.*

***Priority Area IV: Strengthen Community Resilience***

**The following output must be included in any resilience project:**
Describe how the community will become more resilient at the end of the project. Report the actual number of communities that implemented a program, project or tool to strengthen community resilience.

**Activities:** GMP seeks to fund projects that utilize **existing or new** techniques, tools, and information to assist coastal stakeholders, municipalities and federally recognized tribes, in assessing risks and vulnerabilities to natural or man-made disasters to improve community resiliency. Project examples include:

- Develop and implement a strategy (via program, project or tool) to address identified gaps in community resilience.
- Assess community resilience needs, develop and implement tools (handouts, phone apps, and/or use social media) to strengthen community resilience efforts in local/regional communities.

- Develop and implement mitigation efforts along with corresponding resilience curriculum to assist local leaders and individuals in decision making for stronger and more resilient communities.
- Investigate climate variability to develop and implement a risk assessment for future extreme events that will be utilized by stake holders and policy makers in Gulf communities.

*Under the Strengthen Community Resilience Priority Area, budgets may not exceed $300,000. Anticipated results should align with the funding level requested.*

***EACH PROPOSAL MUST ALSO INCLUDE AN OUTREACH COMPONENT.*** The outreach component could include, but is not limited to:

- Developing news releases for local media sources
- Presenting project to community groups, schools, local/state government organizations, etc.
- Involving community members in the project
- Disseminating lessons learned, project goals etc. to stakeholders

**C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs & Performance Measures.** Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf).

1. **Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan.** The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support at least one of the following EPA Strategic Plan Goals:
    a. Goal 1 - Core Mission: Deliver real results to provide Americans with clean air, land, and water, and ensure chemical safety, Objective 1.2 - Provide for Clean and Safe Water: Ensure waters are clean through improved water infrastructure and, in partnership with states and tribes, sustainably manage programs to support drinking water, aquatic ecosystems, and recreational, economic, and subsistence activities.
    b. Goal 2 – Cooperative Federalism: Rebalance the power between Washington and the states to create tangible environmental results for the American people, Objective 2.2 - Increase Transparency and Public Participation: Listen to and collaborate with impacted stakeholders and provide effective platforms for public participation and meaningful engagement.

All applications must be for projects that support at least one of the goals and objectives identified above.

Please read EPA's FY2018-22 Strategic Plan for more information.

2. **Environmental Outputs and Outcomes.** The significance of environmental outputs and outcomes you expect to achieve will be considered under the evaluation criteria during the selection process and must be addressed in the proposal submission (See Sections IV.C. and V.A.)

a. **Outputs.** The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Progress reports and a final report are required outputs for every project, as specified in Section VI.C. of this announcement, “Reporting Requirement.” In addition, at least one of the expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement must be one of the outputs listed in Section I.B.

b. **Outcomes.** The term "outcome" means an environmental result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out project activities and/or completing outputs related to an environmental goal. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. Proposals must include a description of project outcomes resulting from the project outputs, even if the outcome to be achieved is beyond the assistance agreement funding period.

During preparation of the proposal, the applicant should consider the following questions in order to develop output and outcome measures which document project results:

i) What are the measurable short term and longer-term results that the project will achieve?
ii) How will the applicant measure progress in achieving the expected and measurable results?

Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-03/documents/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf.

**D. Statutory Authority.** The statutory authority for this action is the Clean Water Act, §104(b)(3), which authorizes the award of cooperative agreements to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. A demonstration/implementation project 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 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 is not a demonstration.

## II. AWARD INFORMATION

**A. Available Funding.** The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive funding opportunity is approximately $5 million unless additional funding (e.g. FY 2019 funding) becomes available.

EPA anticipates award approximately 12 cooperative agreement(s) under this announcement, subject to the availability of funds, quality of evaluated proposals, and other applicable considerations.

The following is the expected range of awards in each of the priority areas:

1. *Priority Area I: Water Quality Improvement.* Funds requested may not exceed $800,000; up to 7 awards.
2. *Priority Area II: Protect, Enhance or Restore Habitat.* Funds requested may not exceed $500,000; up to 7 awards.
3. *Priority Area III: Environmental Education and Outreach.* Funds requested may not exceed $200,000; up to 5 awards.
4. *Priority Area IV: Strengthen Community Resilience*. Funds requested may not exceed $300,000; up to 7 awards.

NOTE: Funding requested must align with the priority area chosen for review and anticipated results should align with the funding level requested.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding (e.g. FY 2019 funding) becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of the original selections.

**B. Project Period for Awards.** The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will begin in Calendar Year 2019. Proposed project periods may be up to three years.

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

**D. Funding Type.** The funding for selected projects will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for this project will be:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 2 CFR 317 and 2 CFR 318, review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors);
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

## III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

**A. Eligible Entities.** The following entities are eligible to apply for funding under this announcement; State and local governments, interstate agencies, Tribes, colleges and universities, and other public or non-profit organizations.

Non-profit organization, as defined by 2 CFR Part 200, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve and/or expand its operations. Note that 2 CFR Part 200 specifically excludes the following types of organizations from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation: (i) institutions of higher education; and (ii) state, local and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments. While not considered to be a non-profit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR Part 200, Institutions of Higher Education and state, local and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA.

For-profit organizations, including for-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals, are not eligible entities for this funding opportunity. Additionally, non-profit 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.

***Notice to non-profit organizations:***

- Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8: EPA's Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards. In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the grants management office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8. This review may cause a delay in award.
- Non-profit organizations must have documentation of non-profit status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service or their state of incorporation.

**B. Cost Sharing or Matching.** Neither a cost share nor matching funds are required under this competition.

**C. Ineligible Activities. Projects ineligible for funding under this program are:**

- Actions required to settle a formal enforcement action or included in a court order; or specified as a required mitigation measure under a state, local, or federal permit for a specific project; however, grant funding may be used to enhance or expand such projects beyond minimum requirements for compliance.
- Work involving only routine maintenance of storm water infrastructure and other facilities.
- Projects which fall under the existing planning responsibilities of an individual state or local government (e.g., development of TMDLs or MS4 permits).
- Routine “gray infrastructure” projects (e.g., installation of sewer lines).

**D. Threshold Eligibility Criteria.** *These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding.* Only proposals from eligible entities (see above) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. **Priority Area Selection:** Proposals must identify **ONE** main priority area to be evaluated under. Proposals that do not identify a priority area from Section I or identify more than one main priority area will not be considered.
2. **Program Relevance:** Proposals must include at least one of the priorities and activities listed in Section I.B. and demonstrate how the project meets the output associated with the priority selected. If the project does not address at least one of the priorities, outputs and activities listed in I.B. it will not be considered. Note: Proposals may include more than one priority area and activity listed in Section I.B.
3. **Project Location:** Projects must be carried out in the Gulf of Mexico region (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida) and its watersheds, including their out-of-geographic region contributory watersheds.
4. **Funding Request Limit:** Requests for EPA funding amounts in excess of the funding amounts listed in Section I.B for each priority area, including direct and indirect costs, will not be considered. For example, if the Environmental Education priority area is selected, your proposal should not request more than $200,000 in EPA funding.
5. **Outreach:** Proposals that do not contain an outreach component as described in Section I will not be considered.
6. **Ineligible activities:** If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities (listed in III.C), the proposal will be ineligible for funding.
7. **Substantial Compliance:** Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the narrative proposal and budget, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
8. **Proposal submission:** In addition, proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the proposal submission deadline of 11:59 Eastern Time on July 31, 2018 Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their proposal is timely submitted.

Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal/application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with gmp-rfp@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

## IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

1. **Limited Exception Procedure:** Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by

hard copy, email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

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

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

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:
Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
Organization Name and Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS)
Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through Grants.gov.

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

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 25, 2018 it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2018). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2018 with a submission deadline

of January 15, 2019, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2019.

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

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

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

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

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to Grants.gov and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-GM-Cooperative-Agreements-2018, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.475), in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

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

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than July 31st 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

**B. Technical Issues with Submission.**

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

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

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to Grants.gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to Jeanne Allen at gmp-rfp@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Jeanne Allen at 228-679-5892. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Jeanne Allen at 228-679-5892.

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

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

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

**C. Content of Proposal Submission:** Applicants must include the information outlined below in their proposals. **Pages in excess of the page limitations identified below will not be reviewed.** Applicants must also ensure that the proposal narrative provides information addressing all the proposal evaluation criteria identified in Section V.A. and the threshold criteria identified in III.D. Please submit all the application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package accessed using the instructions below.

| Proposal Submission Content | |
|---|---|
| *Required Forms* | |
| Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) | Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number and email address. This form also requires a registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B), and Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. The authorized representative must sign the SF424. |
| Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF424A) | Provide overall budget information on the form's tabular format. |
| Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) | |
| Grants.gov Lobbying Form | The authorized representative must sign this form. |
| EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54 | |
| EPA Form 4700-4 – Preaward Compliance Review Report | Form 4700-4 should be completely and accurately filled out. |
| Project Narrative Attachment Form | Follow the Proposal Information Page, Proposal Narrative, and Budget instructions below. |
| Federal Indirect Cost Rate Agreement | Use Other Attachments Form to submit. Only needed if requesting indirect costs. Please ensure the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is current. |
| Letters of support | Use Other Attachments Form to submit. Letters of support from partners to support description of project involvement. Will be evaluated as identified in V.A.1.f |
| Map | Use Other Attachments Form to submit. Provide a map of the watershed and the proposed work areas related to the project. If the project includes water quality outputs, please identify the 8-digit HUC(s) of where the project will take place. |
| Biographical Sketch | This optional attachment is not included in the page limits and not considered during the evaluation of the proposal. |
| *Proposal Information Page (1 page limit) (see Appendix A for sample format)* | |
| a. Project Title | |

b. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, e-mail address and DUNS number.
c. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project and the amount you are requesting from EPA, if different. *Project costs should align with the scope of the project.*
d. Priority Area. Identify the priority area your project should be evaluated under or your project will not be considered. Choose ONLY ONE of the following: 1) Water Quality Improvement; 2) Protect, Enhance, and/or Restore Habitat; 3) Environmental Education and Outreach; or, 4) Strengthen Community Resilience.
e. Secondary Priority Areas(s). Identify any additional priority areas your project may include.
f. Briefly describe how your project meets EPA Strategic Goals (See Section I.C for more information)
g. Project Description. Briefly describe your project (1-2 sentences).
h. Measurable Outputs. Provide a brief description of the major outputs of your project. At least one output must align with the priority area selected (See Section I.B. for more information.)
i. Outreach Component: Provide a brief description of the project's outreach component. If the whole project encompasses outreach, you only need a brief sentence stating such.
j. Place of Performance. Please identify the area(s) where your project will take place.
k. Project period. Provide anticipated project start date and anticipated project completion date.

*Proposal Narrative (8-page limit) (see Appendix A for sample format)*

EPA recommends that proposals be in 12-point font or larger and readability is of paramount importance. The proposal narrative must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets guidelines established in Sections I-III of this announcement (including the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.D), and must address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V. It must also address how the applicant will perform the activities under the scope of work in Section I.B.

Project Description/Approach:

- The narrative should link the project activities with the required output(s) for the priority areas(s) identified on the cover page.
- The project approach should be described concretely and be appropriate for the desired outputs and outcomes without requiring more detail to assess the likelihood of success. This should include the technical or conceptual foundation for this approach. For example, plans, studies, pilot projects, successful projects elsewhere, etc.
- The narrative should describe the relevance of the project, including how it will benefit the Gulf of Mexico region and if successful, how can it be replicated elsewhere. Example questions to consider in this description include:
    - Does the project pioneer a new or innovative approach?
    - Does it build local or regional capacity?
    - Does it address an existing issue in the Gulf of Mexico watershed?
- The narrative should include language describing how the project supports one or more EPA Strategic Goals (Please see Section 1.C.).
- The narrative should describe how the project will be implemented through collaborative partnerships, including responsible parties for each task. If applicable, the applicant should also highlight local partners and connections and describe volunteer contributions and roles. *Letters of support from partners are required to support description of partner involvement. Letters of support are not included in the 8-page limit.*

Environmental Results:

- Identify well defined outputs that are specific, quantified and significant, including target numbers, throughout the project timeframe.
- The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the project will support achieving the outputs, including the output required for the priority area(s) selected.
- The proposal should discuss plans to track and measure progress and provide a tracking tool such as a milestone or GANTT chart. The tracking tool should also include the reports schedule.
- The proposal should describe major tasks, deliverables for each task, and schedule for completion. The link between the tasks and achievement of identified outputs and outcomes should be clear.
- For awards under this competition that are expected to exceed $200,000 in federal funding AND involve the generation or use of environmental data, please provide a statement acknowledging 1) your need to demonstrate competency prior to beginning work and 2) your understanding that a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and/or a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) may be required. Please see Section IV. O. at the following link for more information: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses#competency. For further information, please see the Frequently Asked Questions Document regarding this EPA requirement: https://www.epa.gov/measurements/documents-about-measurement-competency-under-assistance-agreements
- The proposal should describe how it will ensure a lasting impact beyond the period of performance.

Applicant Capability and Past Performance

- The proposal should describe the applicant's history of successfully a) completing and managing assistance agreements and b) meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final performance 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. If such progress was not being made, please describe why.
  Note: This section of the proposal should include a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than three agreements, and preferably EPA agreements)
- The proposal should describe the applicant's organizational experience and staff expertise to be able to assess the ability of applicant to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Outreach Component

- The proposals should identify and describe who the results will be shared with, provided to, or otherwise used to inform better environmental stewardship. This should include information about why this project is important to the audience specified and how the applicant plans to engage them.
- The proposal should describe how the project information will be publicized and how project results will continue to be shared beyond the period of performance.

*Note: For academic applicants, this Outreach criterion is about how the results will be shared and why they are important outside the academic area.*

Expenditure of Awarded Funds

- The proposal should describe the financial controls currently in place to ensure that awarded funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner.

| *Budget (3-page limit) (see Appendix A for sample format)* |
| --- |
| Budget |

- The proposal should provide a budget table. The budget table should cross-reference the SF-424A budget categories while breaking out the line items for each budget category. Budget resources necessary for completing a QAPP (if applicable), sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress should be included. The budget table should identify major costs associated with the approach in an easily understandable format.
- The proposal should provide a budget narrative. The budget narrative should cross-reference the budget table, providing explanation of all costs – detailing the purpose of the expenditure and how it was calculated. Where possible, the budget narrative should link expenses with tasks and deliverables from the project description. Budget resources necessary for completing a QAPP (if applicable), sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress should be included. The budget narrative should clearly explain cost calculations and correlate the costs to activities identified in the proposal.
- The overall project costs and various components should be well justified and reasonable.

** The indirect cost rate assessed by organization may be considered in the evaluation of the budget narrative, tables and project costs*
**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.*

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically.
Please email Jeanne Allen at gmp-rfp@epa.gov to confirm receipt of your proposal. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

**D. Submission Dates and Times.** The closing date and time for submission of proposals is July 31st, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET). Proposals submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

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

## V. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

Only eligible entities whose proposals meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion set forth below. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal package submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

### A. Evaluation Criteria

| Proposal Narrative Criteria | Points |
|---|---|
| **1. <u>Project Description/Approach:</u>**<br>Each criterion below is worth 5 points in the evaluation. The applicant will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which the proposal: | **30** |

| | |
|---|---|
| a) Links the project activities with the required output(s) for the priority area(s) identified on the cover page (Please see Section I.B). *Consideration is also given to how successfully the project integrates more than one priority area.*<br>b) Describes the project concretely, including enough detail to assess the likelihood of success. The proposal should describe the approach, including the technical or conceptual foundation for this approach – for example, plans, studies, pilot projects, successful projects elsewhere, etc.<br>c) Describes an approach that is appropriate for the desired outputs and outcomes.<br>d) Describes the relevance of the project, including how it will benefit the Gulf of Mexico region. *For water quality projects, consideration is also given to how the proposal takes advantage of currently existing baseline water quality data to provide efficiency in measuring water quality improvement and/or currently existing watershed plans (i.e. National Estuary Program CCMP or other existing watershed management plans). For habitat projects, consideration is also given to how the proposal takes advantage of existing habitat restoration, enhancement or protection plans (i.e. National Estuary Program CCMP, Land Trust, Tribal).*<br>e) Describes how the project supports one or more EPA Strategic Goals (Please see Section 1.C.).<br>f) Describes how the project will be implemented through collaborative partnerships, including responsible parties for each task. If applicable, the applicant should also highlight local partners and connections and describe volunteer contributions and roles. *Letters of support from partners are required to support description of partner involvement.* | |
| **2. <u>Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures:</u>**<br>Each criterion below is worth 5 points in the evaluation. The applicant will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which the proposal:<br>a) Identifies well defined outputs and outcomes, including target numbers, throughout the project timeframe.<br>b) Demonstrates how the project will support achieving the outputs required. *Consideration is also given to how successfully the project integrates more than one priority area output.*<br>c) Describes results that are specific, quantified and significant.<br>d) Discusses plans to track and measure progress, including a tracking tool such as a milestone or GANTT chart. The tracking tool should also include the reports schedule.<br>e) Describes major tasks, deliverables for each task, and schedule for completion. The link between the tasks and achievement of identified outputs and outcomes should be clear. If applicable, a brief description for addressing quality assurance requirements (QAPP and QMP) should be included.<br>f) Describes how it will ensure a lasting impact beyond the period of performance. | **30** |
| **<u>3. Outreach Component:</u>**<br>Each criterion below is worth 5 points in the evaluation. The applicant will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which the proposal:<br>a) Identifies who the results will be shared with, provided to, or otherwise used to inform better environmental stewardship. This should include information about why this project is important to the audience specified and how the applicant plans to engage them.<br>b) Describes how the project information will be publicized and how project results will continue to be shared beyond the period of performance.<br>*Note: For academic applicants, this Outreach criterion will evaluate how the results will be shared and why they are important outside of academia.* | **10** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **4. <u>Applicant Capability and Past Performance</u>**<br>Each criterion below is worth 5 points in the evaluation. The applicant will be evaluated on the extent to which the proposal:<br>a)Describes the applicant's history of successfully i) completing and managing assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C. of the announcement and ii) meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to 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. If such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not.<br>*Note: This section of the proposal should list up to three federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (preferably EPA agreements)*<br>*In evaluating applicants under the criteria above, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files, the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information Systems and/or prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors. If you do not provide any response for these items, you will receive a score of 0 for these factors.*<br>b) Describes their organizational experience and staff expertise to assess the ability of applicant to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. | **10** |
| **<u>5. Expenditure of Awarded Funds</u>:** This criterion is worth 5 points in the evaluation. The applicant will be evaluated on the extent to which the proposal describes the financial controls currently in place to ensure that awarded funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner. | **5** |
| **Proposal Budget Criteria** | **Points** |
| Each criterion below is worth 5 points in the evaluation. The applicant will be evaluated on the extent to which the proposal:<br>a) Provides a budget table identifying major costs associated with the proposal in an easily understandable format. Budget resources necessary for completing a QAPP, if applicable, sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress, should be included.<br>b) Provides a budget narrative clearly explaining cost calculations, purpose of the costs and correlating the costs to activities identified in the proposal. Where possible, the budget narrative should link expenses to tasks and deliverables from the project description. Budget resources necessary for completing a QAPP, if applicable, sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress, should be included.<br>c) Includes costs and various components that are justified and reasonable.<br>*Note: The indirect cost rate assessed by organization may be considered in the evaluation of the budget narrative, tables and project cost.* | **15** |

**B. Review and Selection Process.** Proposals will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those proposals which meet all the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above. Proposals meeting the threshold criteria will be evaluated by an EPA Gulf of Mexico Review Panel. One Review Panel will be developed for each priority area. Each Review Panel will consist of EPA staff and may also include representatives from other Federal agencies. Each proposal will be scored by the panel for the priority area specified by the applicant. The Review Panels will score and rank the eligible proposals by priority area (as identified by the applicant) using the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. Four ranking lists (one for each priority area) will be developed. Each proposal will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered according to the numerical score. Preliminary funding recommendations for each priority area will be provided to the Selection Official based on this ranking.

**C**. **Other Factors.** Final funding decisions will be made by the Selection Official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendations of the evaluation team. In making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official may also consider programmatic priorities, funding availability and geographic diversity of funds. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA Award Official.

**D. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation.** Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found on the EPA Solicitation Clauses page. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions

## VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

**A. Award Notices.** Following evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Proposal Notifications *(allow for review time, usually 45-60 days after closing date)*

1. EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via e-mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal or the project contact listed in the proposal. *This notification, which informs the applicant that their proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the Region 4 Grants Management Officer.* Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee that 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., narrative), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.
2. EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via email. *The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance or the project contact listed in the proposal.*

**B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement.** A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/policy-regulations-and-guidance-epa-grants

**C. Reporting Requirement.** Semi-annual progress reports and a detailed final performance report will be required. Semi-annual reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for the next half of the year, and a summary of expenditures are required. The final performance report must be submitted within 90 calendar days after the project end date. The final performance report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved, and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the report should 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 semi-annual reports will be established by EPA, after award.

**D. Disputes** Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-competition-dispute-resolution-procedures. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Gerry Martin at martin.gerry@epa.gov.

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

## VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Gulf of Mexico Program
ATTN: Jeanne Allen
2510 14th Street – Suite 1212
Gulfport, MS 39501
GMP-RFP@epa.gov

Please send all questions to gmp-rfp@epa.gov. Initial questions and answers will be posted at the GMP home page https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico by June 1st and will be updated weekly as new questions are received. Note: Prior to submitting a new question, please check the Q&A to ensure your question is not already answered there.

**Appendix A. Example format of Proposal Information Page, Proposal Narrative and Proposal Budget**

## *Sample Format*

***RFP#: EPA-GM-Cooperative-Agreements-2018-1***

***Instructions:*** *All portions of the proposal must substantially comply with the specific instructions, format and content defined in the RFP. Pages refer to one-side of a single-spaced typed page. Pages in excess of the identified limits will not be considered. Supporting materials, such as resumes, can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the page limits, but will not be considered during the evaluation.*

***Please do not include this instruction page in your final Project Narrative.***

***Please do not include any instruction text from the templates below.***

**[*Proposal Information Page (one page only)*]**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**
**Gulf of Mexico Program Cooperative Agreements 2018**
**EPA-GM-Cooperative Agreements-2018-1**

a. Project Title

b. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, e-mail address and DUNS number.

c. Total Project Cost. [*Specify the total cost of the project.*]; EPA Funds Requested: [*Specify the amount of funding requested from EPA*]

d. Priority Area. [*Identify the main priority area your project should be evaluated under or your project will not be considered. Choose* ***only one*** *of the following as the main priority area: Improve Water Quality; Protect, Enhance or Restore Habitat; Environmental Education and Outreach; Strengthen Community Resilience*]

e. Secondary Priority Areas(s). [*Identify any additional priority areas your project may include.]*

f. EPA Strategic Goals: [*Briefly describe how your project meets EPA Strategic Goals (See Section I.C for more) information.*]

g. Project Description. [*Briefly describe your project (1-2 sentences)*]

h. Measurable Outputs. [*Provide a brief description of the major outputs of your project. At least one output must align with the priority area selected (See Section I.B. for more information.) Example: This project expects to protect 300 acres of wetland habitat in Southern Mississippi.*]

i. Outreach Component: *[Provide a brief description of the project's outreach component. If the whole project encompasses outreach, you only need a brief sentence stating such.]*

j. Place of Performance. *[Please identify the area(s) where your project will take place.]*

k. Project period. *[Provide anticipated project start date and anticipated project completion date.]*

***[Proposal Narrative (8-Page Limit)]***

***Section 1. Project Description/Approach***

*[This section of the narrative must contain a detailed project description, including the following information:*

A. DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION: [*As part of this, describe how the project addresses one or more of the activities listed under scope of work and the required outputs and how it helps further one or more of the Goals and Objectives of EPA's Strategic Plan. The approach should be described concretely, including the technical or conceptual foundation for the approach and appropriate for the desired outputs/outcomes. Enough detail should be provided to assess project success without requiring more information from applicant.*]

B. PROJECT RELEVANCE [*Explanation of project relevance, including how it will benefit the Gulf of Mexico region and if successful how it will be replicated elsewhere. benefits to the public, and specifically the potential audience(s) served. In addition, please describe why the results are important and who they will be shared with, provided to or used to better inform the public (outreach component).]*

C. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION [*Explanation of how the project will be implemented through collaborative partnerships, including responsible parties for each task. If applicable, the applicant should also highlight local partners and connections and describe volunteer contributions and roles. Letters of support from partners are required to support description of partner involvement.*]

## [*Please delete all text that is bracketed and in italics.*]

**Section 2. Environmental Results—Outputs, Outcomes and Performance Measures**

A. *OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES: [This section of the narrative should include a discussion of the outputs and outcomes of the project as defined in Section I.C.2 and 3 of the RFP. Specific outputs and outcomes should be included. Outputs such as semi-annual and final reports and other deliverables should also be included.*

   *In addition to a narrative discussion of the outputs and outcomes, it is suggested that the applicant fill out and include a table tying the activities, outputs and outcomes to a timeline.*

B. *PROJECT PERFORMANCE: [It is expected that the description of project performance will include the following: How the project will support achieving the outputs and outcomes identified; oversight of project partners, subgrantees, and/or contractors and vendors; tracking and reporting actual accomplishments versus proposed outputs/outcomes and proposed timelines/milestones; how the project will ensure a lasting impact beyond the period of performance.]*

C. *ACTION PLAN, TIMELINE AND MILESTONES:* [*Description of major tasks, deliverables for each task, including a detailed timeline for the project including milestones for specific tasks, such as bidding,*

*procurement, installation and reports. Applicants should schedule time for QAPP development and approval (if necessary) and Final Report preparation into the project timeline.*]

[*In addition to a narrative discussion of your project and action plan, it is suggested that the applicant fill out and include a visual milestone table (example below) in this section of the narrative*.]

| Milestone | 2017 | | | | | | 2018 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept |
| Quality Assurance Project Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Developed and Approved | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Management Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Developed and Approved | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Project Work Conducted | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Quarterly Project Calls w/EPA | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X |
| Environmental Outreach | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Implementation | | | | | | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X |
| Semi-Annual Reporting | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | |
| Final Report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Developed and Approved | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X |

D. ENVIRONMENTAL DATA STATEMENT [*For awards under this competition that are expected to exceed $200,000 in federal funding AND involve the generation or use of environmental data, please see Section IV.C.2.a.vii.*]

## Section 3. Outreach Component

**[***This section of the proposal should describe who the project results will be shared with or otherwise used to inform better environmental stewardship and describe how the project information will be publicized and results shared beyond the period of performance.]*

## Section 4. Applicant Capability and Past Performance

*[ This section of the proposal should include a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than three agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.]*

*[If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.A.4.a of this RFP. A neutral score is half of the total points available. If you do not provide any response for this item, you may receive a score of zero (0) for these factors.]*

ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE and STAFF EXPERTISE [*Description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project. Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project*]

**Section 5. Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds**

*[This section of the proposal must include a detailed discussion of the applicant's approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.]*

**Budget (three-page limit)**

*[This section of the proposal should provide a detailed budget table and a detailed budget narrative, providing more detail to the budget found in SF-424A.*

*The budget narrative should clearly explain cost calculations, purpose of the costs and correlating the costs to activities identified in the proposal. Where possible, the budget narrative should be keyed to tasks and deliverables from the proposal narrative. Budget resources necessary for completing a QAPP, if applicable, sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress, are expected to be included.*

*Below is an example budget table and narrative:*

| I. Salary and Wages (Monthly Rate x Months x FTE) | | | | | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Name | Monthly Rate | Yr 1 % | Yr 2 % | COLA (Yr 2) | | | |
| PI | $12,010 | 0.5 | 0.33 | 3% | $6,005 | $4,082 | $10,087 |
| Co-PI | $10,889 | 0.33 | 0.33 | 3% | $3,593 | $3,701 | $7,294 |
| GRA | $2,050 | 12 | 4.5 | 3% | $24,600 | $9,502 | $34,102 |
| Undergraduate | $1,200 | 2 | 2 | 3% | $2,400 | $2,472 | $4,872 |
| **TOTAL SALARY AND WAGES** | | | | | **$36,598** | **$19,757** | **$56,355** |
| | | | | | | | |
| II. Fringe Benefits | Fringe Rate | | | | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Total** |
| PI | 28% | | | | $1,681 | $1,143 | $2,824 |
| Co-PI | 28% | | | | $1,006 | $1,036 | $2,042 |
| GRA | 30% | | | | $7,380 | $2,851 | $10,231 |
| Undergraduate | 30% | | | | $720 | $742 | $1,462 |
| **TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS** | | | | | **$10,787** | **$5,771** | **$16,559** |
| | | | | | | | |
| III. Travel | | | | | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Total** |
| See budget justification | | | | | $3,000 | $3,000 | $6,000 |
| **TOTAL TRAVEL** | | | | | **$3,000** | **$3,000** | **$6,000** |
| | | | | | | | |
| IV. Equipment (N/A) | | | | | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Total** |
| **TOTAL EQUIPMENT** | | | | | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |
| | | | | | | | |
| V. Supplies | | | | | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Total** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| See budget justification | $7,000 | $4,509 | $11,509 |
| **TOTAL SUPPLIES** | **$7,000** | **$4,509** | **$11,509** |
| | | | |
| VI. Contractual | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Total** |
| See budget justification | $2,000 | $2,000 | $4,000 |
| **TOTAL CONTRACTUAL** | **$2,000** | **$2,000** | **$4,000** |
| | | | |
| VII. Other | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Total** |
| Tuition | $12,368 | $5,328 | $17,696 |
| Participant support costs | $1,000 | $1,000 | $2,000 |
| **TOTAL OTHER** | **$13,368** | **$6,328** | **$19,696** |
| | | | |
| TOTAL DIRECT | $72,754 | $41,365 | $114,119 |
| INDIRECT 38.00% | $22,567 | $13,314 | $35,881 |
| TOTAL | **$95,320** | **$54,680** | **$150,000** |

**Example Budget Justification**

**I. Senior Personnel:**

The PI has requested 0.50 of a month salary for Yr. 1 and 0.33 of a month salary for Yr. 2 with a 3% COLA for Yr. 2. The Co-PI requests for a 0.33 a month summer salary for Yr. 1 and Yr. 2.

| | **Personnel** | **Monthly Salary** | **Percentage** | **COLA** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | PI | $12,010 | .50 | | $6,005 |
| | Co-PI | $10,889 | .33 | | $3,593 |
| Year 2 | PI | $12,010 | .33 | 3% | $4,082 |
| | Co-PI | $10,889 | .33 | 3% | $3,701 |

**Other Personnel:**

Funds are requested to provide stipend for one graduate student for 16.5 months of the project (1 year and one long semester) and will be co-mentored by the PI and the co-PI. Undergraduate for two months of Yr. 1 and Yr. 2 who will work with the graduate student and the PIs to develop and execute the hands-on activities.

| | **Personnel** | **Monthly Salary** | **Months** | **COLA** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | GRA | $2,050 | 12 | | $24,600 |
| | Undergraduate | $1,200 | 2 | | $2,400 |
| Year 2 | GRA | $2,050 | 4.5 | 3% | $9,502 |
| | Undergraduate | $1,200 | 2 | 3% | $2,472 |

**TOTAL PERSONNEL: $56,355**

## II. Fringe Benefits:

Fringe benefits (to cover insurances, social security and retirement) are requested at 28% of PI/Co-PI salary and at 30% graduate/undergraduate research assistant salary.

| | Personnel | Total Salary | Fringe Rate | Fringe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | PI | $6,005 | 28% | $1,681 |
| | Co-PI | $3,593 | 28% | $1,006 |
| | GRA | $24,600 | 30% | $7,380 |
| | Undergraduate | $2,400 | 30% | $720 |
| Year 2 | PI | $4,082 | 28% | $1,143 |
| | Co-PI | $3,701 | 28% | $1,036 |
| | GRA | $9,502 | 30% | $2,851 |
| | Undergraduate | $2,472 | 30% | $742 |

**TOTAL FRINGE: $16,559**

## III. Travel

Travel funds requested are for trips to service centers in several locations. These funds include day trips, clean up days and overnight trips. *Travel will allow for completion of the Tasks and the deliverables identified in the purpose below.*

| Purpose | Location(s) | Item | # Traveler | Rates | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 day-trips to service centers + GOM coast (clean-ups): Task 1 and 2 | Insert locations here | Mileage | 4 | $0.545/mile x 2988 miles | $1,629 |
| 2 overnight trips to Camp: Task 3, Deliverable 1 | insert location here | Lodging<br>Mileage<br>Per diem | 4<br>4<br>4 | $91/night x 2 trips (3 rooms)<br>$0.545/mile x 222 miles x 2 trips<br>$42/day x 2 days | $1,092<br>$ 242<br>$ 336 |
| Conference Task 4, deliverable 4 | To be determined | Lodging<br>Airfare<br>Per diem<br>Registration | 2<br>2<br>2<br>2 | $99/night – 3 nights<br>$475/traveler<br>$42/day x 3 days<br>$601 per registration | $ 297<br>$ 950<br>$ 252<br>$1,202 |

**TOTAL TRAVEL: $6,000**

## IV. Equipment

None

## V. Supplies

Funds are requested for supplies in the amount of $7,000 for Year 1 and $4,509 for Year 2. *Supplies will be utilized for Tasks (insert task number or description here) and the following deliverables (insert deliverables name/number here)*

| Item | Funds Requested |
|---|---|
| Drawing Paper ($20/pack of 20 x 30 packs) | $600 |
| Color for the painting activity ($14/set x 60 sets) | $840 |
| Paint brushes ($7/set x 60 sets) | $419 |
| White board markers ($12/dozen x 7) | $84 |
| Flip charts ($35 each x 20) | $700 |
| Lego supplies ($53/set x 10 sets) | $530 |
| Supplies to build 3D model watershed (plexiglass, clay, Styrofoam, sprinkling cans - $725/set x 2) | $1,450 |
| Water quality sampling equipment (Hach HQ40D pH, conductivity, salinity, TDS, dissolved oxygen, and ORP meter - $1200 each x 5) | $6,000 |
| Livescribe pens and notebook for group discussions ($126/set x 5) | $630 |
| 3M Petrifilm ($128/pack of 50 x 2) | $256 |
| **Total** | **$11,509** |

**TOTAL SUPPLIES: $11,509**

## VI. Contractual

$2,000/year is requested for a Program Specialist, who will recruit and enroll students for the meetings, summer camps, and clean-up day. The Program Specialist also will do paperwork associated with informed consent of the parents for assessments associated with the various project activities. *Contractual support will be utilized for the following Tasks (insert task number or description here) and the following deliverables (insert deliverables name/number here)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | Program Specialist | $2,000 |
| Year 2 | Program Specialist | $2,000 |
| | **Total** | **$4,000** |

**TOTAL CONTRACTUAL: $4,000**

## VII. Other

Tuition requested for Year 1and Year 2, based on historical data.

Participant support of $1000 per year has been budgeted, which will be used to cover three students per year to participate in the summer camp, who will play a key role in the conduction of the hands-on meetings.

| | Tuition | Participation Support | Total Cost |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | $12,368 | $1,000 | $13,368 |
| Year 2 | $5,328 | $1,000 | $6,327 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **$17,696** | **$2,000** | **$19,696** |

**TOTAL OTHER: $19,696**

**VIII. Indirect**

Indirect costs are rate of 38% of the Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). The cognizant agency for the F&A rate for the (insert name here) is the (insert name here). Indirect does not include tuition and participant support.

| | Total Direct Costs | Total Indirect Costs | Total Costs |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | $72,754 | $22,567 | $95,320 |
| Year 2 | $41,365 | $13,314 | $54,680 |
| Total | $114,119 | $35,881 | $150,000 |

**TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS: $35,881**

## TOTAL PROJECT COST: $150,000

## [*Please <u>delete</u> all text that is bracketed and in italics*.]

*[Note on Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must 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.]*

**Appendix B. Helpful Checklist for GMP Cooperative Agreement Applicants**

Please note that this is included as a helpful tool and is not required.

| | |
|---|---|
| | Does the proposal budget table and narrative match the SF 424A? |
| | Do contacts on the SF424 match the key contacts form? |
| | If requesting indirect costs, have you included a current copy of your federal indirect cost rate agreement? |
| | Have you completed all of the forms (424, 424A, 424B, EPA Key Contacts, 6600-06, 5700-54, 4700-4, and Current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement if applicable)? |
| | Have you identified ONE priority area for the review process as well as any secondary priority area(s) that should be considered (if applicable)? |
| | Have you identified how the project meets at least one EPA Strategic Goal? |
| | Does the project address at least one of the priorities, activities and outputs listed in Section I.B? |
| | Does the proposal contain an outreach component? |