

OVERVIEW

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

TITLE: Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2023 Request for Applications for:
Multiple Tributary Models for the Assessment of 2035 Climate Change Risk and Other Water Quality Challenges

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA)

RFA #: EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-10

ASSISTANCE LISTING #: 66.466

IMPORTANT DATES

May 18, 2023	Issuance of Request for Applications (RFA)
July 3, 2023	Application submission deadline (see Section IV for more information)
August 2, 2023	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
August 16, 2023	Approximate date for selected applicant to submit revised federal cooperative agreement application
October 1, 2023	Approximate date of award/Project start date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	2
II. AWARD INFORMATION.....	10
III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	11
IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	13
V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	18
VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	20
VII. AGENCY CONTACT	22
VIII. OTHER INFORMATION	22
APPENDIX A. APPLICATION FORMAT	24
APPENDIX B. BUDGET GUIDANCE.....	26

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

1. About the Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 117, 33 USC Section 1267, the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) is responsible for supporting the Executive Council through a number of actions, including the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. CWA Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

The Chesapeake Bay Program was bolstered by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, allowing for increased investment in traditional, nature-based, and green infrastructure. The Chesapeake Bay Program is committed to increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in its grant programs, projects, and associated community engagement efforts.

The CBP is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. Today, the CBP partners include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission (a tri-state legislative body); and EPA, representing the federal government. The partnership's work is guided by the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), which establishes the plan for collaboration across the Bay's political boundaries and establishes goals and outcomes for the restoration of the Bay, its tributaries, and the lands that surround them.

2. About the CBP Partnership

The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the Executive Council (EC), which, through its leadership, establishes the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and exerts its leadership to rally public support for the Bay effort and signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay restoration.

The Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) works on behalf of the EC to translate the restoration vision into policy and implementation actions. In addition, the PSC acts as the senior policy advisors to the Executive Council, accepting items for their consideration and approval and setting agendas for Executive Council meetings. The PSC also provides policy and program direction to the Management Board.

The Management Board (MB) works to provide strategic planning, set priorities and offer operational guidance to the CBP, including overseeing the Goal Implementation Teams and implementation of the management strategies.

The Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Thus, academic, federal, and state scientists and experts, advocacy organizations, environmental managers and others become active members of the broad restoration partnership.

Pursuant to CWA Section 117(b)(2), 33 USC Section 1267(b)(2), the Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the EC in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. The CBPO and CBP, mentioned above, are two distinct entities.

For additional background information on the CBP structure, achievements, and commitments, see the CBP Partnership's website located at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/>.

3. Chesapeake Bay Modeling

Climate change was recognized in the historic 2010 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) as a challenge to be addressed by the Chesapeake 2017 Midpoint Assessment (2017 MPA). During the 2017 MPA, a comprehensive airshed, watershed, and estuarine modeling system was successfully developed and applied to address climate change conditions over the 30 years between the base year (1995) and 2025. Consequently, nutrient and sediment target loads were lowered to offset the nonachievement of the Chesapeake's living-resource-based water quality standards that resulted from the 30 years of climate change.

The CBP leadership of the PSC and the EC has now directed the CBP Partnership to prepare to address 2035 climate change conditions with a suite of updated airshed, watershed, and estuarine models to be completed and fully operational by December 2025, reviewed by the CBP in 2026, and applied to CBP management issues in 2027.

Dissolved oxygen (DO), chlorophyll, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and water clarity are included as TMDL water quality criteria in Delaware's, the District of Columbia's, Maryland's, and Virginia's water quality standard regulations. Because these four jurisdictions must achieve each of these water quality criteria to remove their Bay tidal waters from the current list of impaired waters, the Modeling Workgroup recommended that a state-of-the-science hydrodynamic model, based on an unstructured Semi-implicit Cross-scale Hydroscience Integrated System Model (SCHISM) model grid, be coupled to the ICM water quality code. The Integrated Compartment Model (ICM) code has been continually refined and improved by the CBP for three decades and includes key water quality and living resource processes.

The CBP Partnership's principal objective is to improve model simulation of Chesapeake Bay DO, chlorophyll, submerged aquatic vegetation, and water clarity conditions to better understand the impacts of alternative management strategies to achieve the living-resource-based water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay, its tidal tributaries, and embayments under future climate change conditions.

4. CBP Modeling Workgroup

The two Multiple Tributary Model (MTM) grant recipients (also referred to as MTM teams in this RFA), will be under the technical guidance of the CBP [Modeling Workgroup](#). The Modeling Workgroup is charged with the responsibility of providing state-of-the-art decision-support modeling tools to the CBP Partnership that are developed and applied through community and participatory principles. Modeling Workgroup members are comprised of scientists, engineers, and technical managers from throughout the Chesapeake Bay Partnership.

The responsible planning and management of resources to provide the best available decision-support modeling tools requires the Modeling Workgroup to adhere to the core values of:

- Integration - Integration of the most recent science and knowledge in air, watershed, and coastal waters to support ecosystem modeling for restoration decision-making.
- Innovation - Embracing creativity and encouraging improvement in the development and support of transparent and robust modeling tools.
- Independence - Making modeling decisions based on the best available evidence and using the most appropriate methods to produce, run, and interpret models, independent of policy considerations.
- Inclusiveness - Commitment to an open and transparent process and the engagement of relevant partners that results in strengthening the Partnership's decision-making tools.

B. Scope of Work

1. Introduction

This RFA is seeking insightful, expert, and cost-effective applications from eligible applicants to apply a state-of-the-science unstructured grid model to the tidal waters for two of Chesapeake's tributaries (Choptank and Patapsco) and their embayments (hereafter called the Multiple Tributary Model or MTM). EPA intends to a up to two cooperative agreements, one for each tributary. Applications must only address one tributary. Applicants interested in applying for funding to address more than one tributary must do so in separate applications.

2. Integration of the Main Bay Model and Multiple Tributary Models

The management purpose of the Main Bay Model (MBM) is to assess the Chesapeake tidal water quality standards including dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll *a*, suspended solids, water clarity, and SAV under current and future conditions of climate change to 2035 and beyond. The MTM scenarios, as directed by Chesapeake Bay decision-makers, will provide support for management strategies to achieve water quality standards in TMDLs and assessments in the tidal Bay (other than the 2010 Chesapeake TMDL). The 2010 Chesapeake TMDL will be assessed by the Phase 7 MBM now under development. The MTMs and the MBM will be completed and fully operational by December 2025.

The model system to be used by the MTM teams is the same used by the MBM team and is based on the linked SCHISM-ICM hydrodynamic-water quality model. The MTM teams will work in close coordination with the MBM team and will share specified model boundaries, state variables, and calibration approaches with the MBM to achieve a consistent simulation among the MBM and MTMs, so that both can be used for water bodies that share a local TMDL or Assessment with the Chesapeake 2010 TMDL.

The MBM of the entire tidal Chesapeake will be the regulatory model supporting the 2010 Chesapeake TMDL. The MTM teams will fully collaborate and augment the MBM as well as perform the following key aspects and tasks to:

- 1) Improve the simulation and understanding of shallow water processes,
- 2) Improve CBP estuarine science and analysis by fully integrating the MTMs into the MBM development thereby increasing the number of CBP science teams looking into Chesapeake tidal water quality,
- 3) Assist in improving all tidal Chesapeake water quality assessments by bringing tidal TMDLs and other water quality assessments in the Chesapeake up to date and linked with the latest Phase 7 next-generation watershed, airshed, and estuary models,

- 4) Collaborate with and support the MBM, the Chesapeake TMDL regulatory model of the entire tidal Chesapeake, and
- 5) Provide MTM support for updating tidal TMDLs and other water quality assessments in the Chesapeake to future climate hydrologies and estimated tidal water quality under a 2035 hydrology, climate, and sea level rise.

The work includes the development, calibration, and application of fully operational MTMs by December 2025 for tidal tributary waters of the Chesapeake using the SCHISM-ICM water quality code and with full coordination and linkage with the CBP MBM, which uses the same model code. The final two years of the MTM work will cover a year-long review of the MTMs in 2026 and application of scenarios and analysis to CBP management needs in 2027.

3. MTM Schedule for First Three Years: Development and Calibration

Over the course of the five-year project, with an anticipated projected award and start date of October 1, 2023, the first three years (2023 to mid-2026) will concentrate on model development and the final two years (mid-2026 to mid-2027) will concentrate on CBP model review (2026) and for model application, scenario development, and analysis (2027) as directed by CBP decision-makers, as well as for model documentation. Over the course of the project, the MTM teams will develop and apply fine-scale tributary models using common forcing conditions, model state variables, and decision rules as the MBM to better represent Bay tributaries and shallow-water processes under future climate change conditions. The MBM team will collaborate and coordinate with the MTM teams on a regular basis over the project period. All models used in the calibration and application of the MTMs will be open source, public domain, and freely available.

The SCHISM model grid, boundary conditions with the MBM, and hydrodynamic calibration will be provided to the two MTM teams for their development of the ICM water quality simulation calibration and application of either the Choptank or Patapsco Rivers. Further guidance will be provided by Standard Operating Procedures of model development and calibration to ensure complete compatibility among the MBM and MTMs.

Calibration of the MTMs (project years 1 and 2) will be to the appropriate CBP monitoring network stations and will include the continuous water quality monitors of the Shallow Water Monitoring Program. Assistance with the monitoring stations available for calibration as well as a summary of the overall conditions within the MTMs will be provided by the CBP Tributary Summaries and other materials. Assessment of the quality and sufficiency of the MTM calibration will be determined by the Modeling Workgroup. Documentation of the MTM's calibration work will proceed over the 2023-2024 period and be reviewed by the Modeling Workgroup.

4. MTM Schedule for Last Two Years: Review and Application

The MTM review year of 2026 will be for a full review of the MTMs and MBM by CBP technical and decision-making groups. The MBM teams will actively engage in the review with information as requested by the CBP and directed by the EPA project officer (PO). Modifications and changes to the MTMs will be provided as requested in the review year. During the review year, the MTM teams will engage and work with various groups and decision-makers local to their particular MTM as well as the CBP to develop initial management scoping scenarios in preparation for the 2027 year of application. Documentation of the model review and initial management scoping scenario process over 2026 will be reviewed by the Modeling Workgroup.

In 2027 the management scoping scenarios developed in 2026 or earlier will be developed as management scenarios under direction of local environmental decision-makers and the CBP. Documentation of the management scenario work over 2026 will be reviewed by the Modeling Workgroup. Ultimately, the ongoing documentation of each MTM project from 2023 to 2027 will be organized into a final report to be reviewed and accepted by the Modeling Workgroup and PO.

5. Scope of Work Details and Objectives

While the CBP partnership is comprised of federal and non-federal organizations, any activities funded under this RFA will not directly benefit the federal partners. The recipient(s) of the cooperative agreement(s) awarded under this RFA may work directly with federal agencies, but the nature of that work will result only in direct, significant benefits to the non-federal agencies, partners, and the general public. Any indirect and incidental benefits to EPA are not the purpose of the cooperative agreements related to this RFA.

EPA is issuing this RFA to support the CBP Partnership's continuing mission of evaluating the effectiveness of management actions taken to reduce nutrient and sediment pollutant loads and to improve Chesapeake Bay water quality through the seven watershed jurisdictions' watershed implementation plans (WIPs) and through local TMDLs and water quality assessments. The mission includes enhancing and maintaining the accountability of systems dependent on tracking, verifying, reporting, and quantifying the estimated pollutant load reduction potential of practices, treatments, and technologies implemented throughout the watershed and assessing their collective influence on Chesapeake Bay tidal water quality. The resultant data will be used by the CBP Partnership to:

- Assess achievement of their two-year milestones;
- Assess progress towards implementing their WIPs;
- Determine management effectiveness of locally-implemented nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction and prevention practices, treatments, and technologies;
- Report Bay and watershed restoration actions to the public;
- Project Chesapeake Bay water quality conditions based on implemented and planned pollutant load reduction actions;
- Support establishment of target pollutant loads to address 2035 climate change risks to the Chesapeake's water quality and living resources;
- Support adaptive management by the CBP partnership; and
- Support Executive Council directives, e.g., those related to climate change.

Applications submitted under this RFA should demonstrate:

- Experience and knowledge in development, calibration, validation, and scientific and management applications of complex, linked environmental models, particularly the SCHISM Model and ICM water quality model;
- Experience and knowledge in working with multi-institutional and multi-agency teams on collaborative development, calibration, validation, and scientific and management application of complex linked environmental models;
- Experience and knowledge in model research and model development programs focused on the productive littoral areas of estuarine and coastal ecosystems, particularly for shallow water systems;
- Knowledge and ability in using the SCHISM-ICM code;

- Full, detailed, and accurate simulation of the effects of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, and climate change related factors in the assessment of the DO, chlorophyll *a*, clarity/SAV, and other water quality standards or assessments in the Chesapeake Bay;
- Ensuring complete web-accessibility of the resultant supporting data, model code, and documentation to the partnership-oriented, implementation-focused structure of the CBP Partnership through open source and public domain products; and
- As appropriate and to the extent practicable, seeking partnership with Tribal communities.

Note: In addition to addressing the tasks listed above, applicants may propose in their application additional tasks that they believe are important to accomplishing the project.

EPA plans to award up to two cooperative agreements under this RFA, one for each tributary (Choptank and Patapsco). Each award is expected to total \$250,000 total for the five-year agreement, consisting of \$50,000 for the first year and each year thereafter. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
MTM Choptank Team	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$250,000
MTM Patapsco Team	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$250,000
Total	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$500,000

If your organization has an interest in this project, the experience and knowledge to accomplish the activities described above and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to apply. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activities are multi-year projects (up to five years), and the application should have a work plan and budget for the first year and a projected work plan and estimated budget detail for each of the subsequent four years. Applicants that request more than the maximum of \$50,000 per year or \$250,000 over 5 years will be found ineligible.

Applications must only address one tributary. Applicants interested in applying for funding to address more than one tributary must do so in separate applications. If the same applicant is ranked highest for more than one tributary and has the capacity to perform multiple projects, EPA will take into consideration other factors, such as program priorities and diversity when making selections. EPA reserves the right to not select the same applicant for both tributaries.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs

Pursuant to Section 6a of [EPA Order 5700.7A1](#), “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,” EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency’s Strategic Plan.

1. Linkage to EPA’s Strategic Plan

The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the [FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#). Awards made under this solicitation will support *Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities, Objective 5.2 Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds* of the [Strategic Plan](#).

[EPA Order 5700.7A1](#) also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. Applicants must include specific statements

describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the objectives described above in Section I.B.5.

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 or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of potential outputs under the Scope of Work of this announcement may include but are not limited to the following:

- Support the Modeling Workgroup, Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT), and other technical and management/policy CBP groups as needed and as directed by the PO.
- Provide tributary level estuarine models, analysis tools, scenarios, and other materials to support Chesapeake protection and restoration efforts and address the needs and requirements of CBP decision-makers and managers for responding to water quality protection, climate change, and other challenges in the Chesapeake.
- Improve the CBP’s Main Bay Model (MBM) and CBP’s management decisions through the successful application of the applicant’s skill, knowledge, and experience in developing quantitative fine-scale SCHISM model assessments of Chesapeake tidal tributaries.
- Demonstrate feasibility and utility of using the state-of-the-science unstructured grid model SCHISM at a fine-scale level in the tributaries coupled with a MBM of the same unstructured grid type to better estimate Chesapeake water quality standards in shallow open waters under 2035 and future climate change conditions.
- Refine local tidal TMDLs and other water quality assessments with the ability to estimate future climate conditions providing CBP managers with essential information about how to respond to climate change challenges.

Semi-annual and final reports will also be required outputs for all activities, as specified in Section VI.C., Reporting, of this announcement.

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 qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of potential outcomes under the Scope of Work of this announcement may include but are not limited to the following:

- Investment in traditional, green, or nature-based infrastructure leading to reduced nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment delivered to tidal Bay waters appropriate to respond to future climate change and other water quality challenges to achieve Bay water quality standards.
- Amount of habitat restored as represented by achievement of the Chesapeake living-resource-based water quality standards and water quality standards of other tidal Chesapeake TMDLs and assessments.
- Increased knowledge and strategies to improve local economic, human health, and environmental goals through a restored Chesapeake Bay.

- Improved knowledge about Chesapeake Bay critical load of nutrients under 2035 and future climate change through achievement of water quality standards in all Chesapeake tributaries.
- Improved CBP decision making and leadership in responding to climate change conditions and other future water quality challenges.

D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

This grant is made pursuant to CWA Section 117(d), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d), which authorizes EPA to issue grants and cooperative agreements for the purposes of protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem, and is funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58). This project is subject to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 1500).

E. 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, 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](#).

F. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation

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

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

The total estimated funding under this solicitation is approximately \$500,000 for up to two cooperative agreements, with \$250,000 total available per award. Funding will be awarded incrementally in the amount of \$50,000 per year per award depending on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award under this announcement or award less than the estimated funding amounts above. Funding depends on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year(s), as funds may be limited based on these applicable considerations.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selection is made. Any additional selection for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decision.

B. Award Type

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

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

EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

For this project, federal involvement would typically be in the form of participation with other CBP partners and stakeholders in an advisory capacity to the grantee. The participation is expected to include involvement through the Modeling Workgroup, various CBP Goal Implementation Teams, and related committees and workgroups (on which EPA also participates to ensure that all the recommendations for technical work support the CBP partners). All work conducted is to support the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and the Chesapeake TMDL.

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 and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is five years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFA is October 1, 2023.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

A. Eligible Applicants

Consistent with Assistance Listing No. 66.466, the Clean Water Act Section 117(d), and EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements (EPA Order 5700.5A1), competition under this solicitation is available for technical and general assistance grants to nonprofit organizations, State, tribal (federally recognized) and local governments, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies. For-profit organizations are not eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA.

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 and 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 non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a non-profit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR 200.1 are also eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible.

Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status; such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. 1611.

B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

Pursuant to CWA Section 117(d)(2)(A), 33 USC Section 1267(d)(2)(A), the agency shall determine the cost-share requirements for awards. The Assistance Listing Number, [66.466](#), states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost-share ranging from 5 percent to 50 percent of eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For this RFA, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of 5 percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

Cost-share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Involvement from foundations, watershed groups, private sector, eligible governmental, as well as non-conventional partners can help with the match. The match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to the match provisions in grant regulations. Applications that do not demonstrate how the minimum 5 percent match will be met will be rejected. Selected recipients must comply with [2 CFR 200.306](#) when meeting a cost share.

C. Threshold Eligibility 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. 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. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this solicitation or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.
2. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.
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 technical problems associated with Grants.gov or SAM.gov. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission outside of Grants.gov.
4. Applications must be for projects that address the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.

5. For an application to be considered eligible for funding, project-related work must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia.
6. Each application must address one of the Chesapeake Bay tributaries (Choptank or Patapsco). Applications that do not address a tributary or address more than one tributary will be rejected. Applicants may submit more than one application, one for each tributary. If an applicant submits more than one application for the same tributary, EPA will confirm with the applicant which one to review.
7. Applications must show how they will meet the 5 percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B. Applications that fail to meet the minimum 5 percent cost-share requirement will be rejected. (See Appendix A for additional information regarding the budget narrative and formula for calculating cost-share.)
8. Applicants that request funding over the maximum available (\$50,000 per year or \$250,000 over 5 years) will be found ineligible.
9. 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 entire application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

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.

A. How to Obtain an Application Package

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from the application package available in the Workspace associated with this opportunity on Grants.gov.

B. Submission Process

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

Applicants must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this funding opportunity based on the [Grants.gov](#) instructions in this announcement. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined [here](#). Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with submissions with respect to this opportunity only are addressed in section 3. Technical Issues with Submission below.

2. Submission Instructions

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

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using [login.gov \(1\)](#) to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

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

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

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

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

b. Grants.gov Registration Instructions

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

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the application submission deadline.

Contact [Grants.gov](#) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](#) to resolve technical issues with Grants.gov. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access

the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

c. Application Submission Process

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

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

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

d. Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **July 3, 2023, 11:59 PM ET**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

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

3. Technical Issues with Submission

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

- 1) Contact Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
- 2) Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- 3) Send an email with the RFA number EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-10 in the subject line to Autumn Rose (rose.autumn@epa.gov) **before** the application deadline time and date and **must** include the following:
 - a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
 - b. Description of the issue
 - c. The entire application package in PDF format.

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

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

EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.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.

4. Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

- 1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- 2) Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- 3) EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
- 4) EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report
- 5) Project Narrative Attachment Form – The project narrative should be prepared as described in Appendix A of the announcement.
- 6) Budget Narrative Attachment Form – The budget narrative should include a spreadsheet that shows each year's cost for the salaries, fringe benefits, total salaries/wages, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual expenses, other cost, and indirect cost. An optional multi-year budget detail template is available at <https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>. For more information, please refer to [RAIN-2019-G02, Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#).
- 7) Other Attachment Form – The applicant's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement should be included, as applicable. See [RAIN-2018-G02-R, Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for additional information about indirect costs.

C. Project Narrative Requirements

Each application will be evaluated using the criteria in Section V.B. of this announcement. All application review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the project narrative. The project narrative shall not exceed **15** pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10 and the application must be submitted in an 8 ½" x 11" page size format. **Note that the 15 pages include all supporting materials, including resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support.** The 15-page limit does not include documentation of non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, the SF-424, SF-424A, budget detail, Key Contacts Form and 4700-4 form. If you submit more than 15 pages for the project narrative, the additional pages will be discarded and will not be reviewed. See Appendix A for additional instructions.

D. Other Application Information

1. Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. EPA implemented the Executive Order in 40 CFR Part 29. EPA may require applicants selected for funding to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review as provided at 40 CFR 29.7 and 40 CFR 29.8. The SPOC list can be found on the webpage below.

[Office of Federal Financial Management Resources and Other Information](#)

EPA may require successful applicants from states that do not have a SPOC to provide a copy of their application for review to directly affected state, area-wide, regional and local government entities as provided at 40 CFR 29.7 and 40 CFR 29.8. These reviews are not required before submitting an application. Only applicants that EPA selects for funding under this announcement are subject to the Intergovernmental Review requirement.

2. Funding Restrictions

a. Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority

Recipients applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirements for “Administrative Costs” under the CWA Section 117 (d)(4), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award (annual grant award = federal share plus cost-share). [Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet](#) is provided as an example of a method to calculate the 10-percent limitation. You are not required to submit Appendix B with your application.

b. Allowable Costs

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E](#). In accordance with applicable law, regulation, and policy, any recipient of funding must agree to comply with restrictions on using assistance funds for unauthorized lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts). See e.g. [2 CFR 200.450](#). Funds generally cannot be used to pay for travel by federal agency staff. Proposed project activities must also comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. The applicant must also review the solicitation for any other programmatic funding restrictions applicable to this program. If awarded funding, the recipient must refer to the terms and conditions of its award for other funding restrictions applicable to its award. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure compliance with these requirements. In addition, please see [2 CFR 200](#) for information on pre-award costs.

E. Coalition Coverage

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; 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.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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

A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews applications for threshold eligibility purposes as described in Section III, CBPO will conduct a merit evaluation of each eligible application. Reviews will be performed by a team of professionals from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. All reviewers will sign a conflict-of-interest statement indicating they have no conflict.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

The evaluation criteria below will be used to review eligible applications submitted under this RFA.

Criteria	Points
1. Organizational Capability and Program Description: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on: a. The quality of the application and the extent to which it demonstrates the organization’s ability to timely and successfully achieve the relevant project objective to support the CBP partners, as described in Section I.B. (18 points) b. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the organizational capability, resources, and relevant skills, experiences, and knowledge for supporting the: i. Development of an MTM as a state-of-the-science unstructured grid model of the tidal Bay for successful achievement of the objectives of the proposed project as demonstrated by the applicant’s expertise, qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources. (18 points) ii. Knowledge, skill, experience, and demonstrated ability for the linkage of an MTM to the CBP’s MBM, both using an unstructured grid SCHISM model	56

with ICM water quality code, including the calibration and validation of the MTM to observed data. (10 points) iii. Application of the MTM through multiple scenario development and analyses while maintaining workflow coordination from hundreds of MBM and MTM scenarios over a one-year (2026) model review and 2027 model application period. (10 points) Note: Prior to naming a contractor (including consultants) or subrecipient in your application as a “partner”, please carefully review Section IV.d, “Contracts and Subawards”, of EPA’s Solicitation Clauses. In evaluating this criterion, EPA will only consider the experience of any contractor(s), including consultants, if the applicant demonstrates they were selected in compliance with the competitive procurement requirements in 2 CFR 200.319 and 2 CFR 200.320. EPA does not accept justifications for sole-source contracts for services or products available in the commercial marketplace based on a contractor’s role in preparing an application.	
2. Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the applicant based on their programmatic capability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, taking into account the applicant’s: a. Past performance in successfully completing and managing assistance agreements identified in the applicant’s project narrative. Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements (but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last five years (preferably EPA agreements). (8 points) b. Extent and quality to which applicant adequately documented and/or reported their progress in achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federal agency assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and, if such progress was not made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (2 points) c. Demonstrated programmatic skill and experience through citation of specific examples relevant to the complexity of work described herein: i. Developing, calibrating, validating, and assessing performance of technically sound estuarine hydrodynamic and water quality models using an unstructured SCHISM grid. (5 points) ii. Synthesizing and effectively applying model input data and information from a wide array of sources. (1 point) iii. Experience with model simulation tools that have the capability to support the production of CBP management-oriented products that support the assessment of the states’ Chesapeake Bay water quality standards. (6 points) Note: In evaluating applicants under Items a. and b., the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information	22

from other sources, including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance, or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors; a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of zero for these subfactors.	
3. Cost-effectiveness: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate each application based on the degree of cost-effectiveness, considering the following factors: organizational overhead, budget breakdown, and ability to control costs for the relevant activity listed in Section I. (6 points)	6
4. Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application includes an adequate plan to: a. Gather and share information learned from scenarios, analyses, and other model applications with the larger CBP Partnership. (4 points) b. Transfer the documentation/information/data/results/recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner. (3 points) c. Document and distribute results to the appropriate audience or summarize information so that EPA can disseminate in a timely manner. (3 points)	10
5. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner (3 points)	3
6. Environmental Results: Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the environmental outputs and outcomes identified in Section I.C. of the RFA. (3 points)	3
TOTAL	100

C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in Section V.B. above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked applications to the CBPO Director or Deputy Director for final selection. In making the final funding decision, the selection official may also consider programmatic goals and priorities, including those described in the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* at https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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

A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that the applicant will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around August 2, 2023 either via electronic or postal mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Region 3 Grants Management Office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official 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 grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided either via email or U.S. Postal Service.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application package. A federal project officer assists in the application process and negotiates a work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

If your application is selected for funding, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-policies-and-guidance-grants>.

C. Reporting

Progress Report/Final Report Requirements

The awarded applicant will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports (every six months) throughout the duration of the agreement to update the EPA Project Officer on project progress. Semi-annual progress reports are due within 30 days after the end of each reporting period, as detailed in the award terms and conditions. The recipient will also be required to participate in semi-annual calls/meetings with the EPA Project Officer (PO) to discuss progress. A final progress report is due to the EPA Project Officer within 120 after the end of the award performance period. The recipient will provide progress and informational presentations to CBP technical and management-decision making groups, when requested.

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

In accordance with [2 C.F.R. Section 1500.12](#), projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

The QMP must document quality assurance policies and practices that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet program objectives. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA's [Quality Management Plan \(QMP\) Standard](#). The recipient's QMP should be reviewed and updated annually as needed. The QMP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 45 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation.

The recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The QAPP is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: [EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans](#). The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. A model template and guidance for developing QAPPs can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/quality/template-developing-generic-quality-assurance-project-plan-or-plan-elements-model>.

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 [Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures](#). Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement. Note, that the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

E. Mandatory Disclosures

As required by [2 CFR § 200.113](#), non-federal entities or applicants for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR § 200.339](#) including suspension and debarment.

F. Combining Applications Into One Award

If an applicant submits applications for multiple tasks/activities under this competition, and is selected for multiple tasks/activities, EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines separate applications for different tasks/activities.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact Autumn Rose via email at rose.autumn@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-10). All questions and answers will be posted on <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

In developing your application, you may find the following documents helpful. Websites for guidance documents are listed here. If you prefer a paper copy, please call 1-800-YOUR BAY.

Boundaries of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/maps>

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement

Chesapeake Bay Program Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance

<https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>

EPA grantee forms

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm>

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/implementation-quality-assurance-requirements-organizations-receiving-epa-financial>

Please visit the EPA Grants website (<https://www.epa.gov/grants>), the EPA Region 3 Grants website (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>) or the Chesapeake Bay Program website (<https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>) if you have questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Further information on CBP committees is located at:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/how_we_are_organized

APPENDIX A. APPLICATION FORMAT
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III
EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-10

The following information must be provided, or the application may not be considered complete and may not be evaluated.

Project Narrative Format: Use the Project Narrative Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. Project narratives as described below shall not exceed 15 single-spaced pages in length. The project narrative must be submitted in an 8 ½" x 11" page size format, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 15 pages include all supporting materials, including resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support. The 15-page limit does not include documentation of non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, SF-424, SF-424A, budget narrative, Key Contacts Form and 4700-4 form. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

1. Name, address (street and email), and contact information of the applicant

2. Background - Include the following in this section:

- i) Project title
- ii) Brief description of your organization.
- iii) Documentation of non-profit status, if applicable.
- iv) Brief biographies of applicant lead(s) including resumes and/or curriculum vitae.
- v) Funding requested. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost-share or in-kind resources.
- vi) UEI number — See Section IV.B

3. Work plan - Include the following in this section:

- i) A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements, as described in Section I.B of the announcement.
- ii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the application will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project, as outlined in Section I.C of the announcement.
 - Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outputs for the activity are provided in Section I.C.2.
 - Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outcomes are included in section I.C.3.
- iii) Review Criteria:
Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFA. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative.

With specific respect to the Programmatic Capability Past Performance factor in V.B: Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last five years (no more than five 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.

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

Budget detail: For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a budget detail breakdown by the major budget categories (i.e. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). For more information, please refer to EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment's budget detail guidance at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02> and indirect cost guidance located at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02-r>.

In each of the budgets, include the cost-share amount (a minimum of 5 percent for each of the total project costs) and demonstrate how the cost-share will be met, including, if applicable, letters of commitment from any third-party contributors. Please note that subaward costs must be itemized under a separate sub-line item within the "Other" budget cost category.

In addition, grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirement for "Administrative Costs" under CWA Section 117 (d)(4), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent administration cost cap is located in Appendix B: Chesapeake Bay Program Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet.

To calculate the specific cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

- 1) EPA assistance amount (including any in-kind) ÷ 95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
- 2) 100% of Total Grant Amount × 5% = Applicant's Cost-Share Amount

APPENDIX B. BUDGET GUIDANCE

EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-10

SAMPLE

(DO NOT SUBMIT WORKSHEET WITH APPLICATION)

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST CAP WORKSHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: In accordance with Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 117(d)(4) and 117(e)(6) , the costs of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under CWA Section 117(d) or 117(e) shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. The annual grant award is the total costs including Federal and cost share amounts. The worksheet below is provided to assist you in calculating allowable administrative costs. The Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) should reflect how your administrative costs will comply with the cap. For specific guidance, refer to the next page of this sample "Compliance with CWA Section 117 Requirements Restricting Administrative Costs."

Total Costs	\$ _____
Cap %	X .10
Limit on Administrative Costs	\$ (a) _____
List Administrative Costs: (Budgeted costs for application)	
_____	\$ _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Total	\$ (b) _____

Line (b) cannot exceed Line (a).

COMPLIANCE WITH CWA SECTION 117 RESTRICTING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Statutory Authority

Under statutory authority, applicants applying for Chesapeake Bay Program grants/cooperative agreements under Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 117 (d) or (e) must adhere to the requirement on administrative costs as follows:

- Under CWA Section 117(a)(1) Administrative Cost - The term “administrative cost” means the cost of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under this section.
- Under CWA Section 117(d)(4) - Administrative Costs. - Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.
- Under CWA Section 117(e)(6) - Administrative Costs. -Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Guidance for Determining Administrative Costs

As determined by EPA/CBPO, the following provides guidance in determining administrative costs for grants/cooperative agreements under CWA Section 117 (d) and (e).

1. Administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits charged against the project or program element for the sole purpose of administering the grant/cooperative agreements shall not exceed 10% of the annual grant **award (Federal and cost share)**. 100% of the salaries and fringe benefits related to these functions are considered administrative costs. Examples of administrative costs include, but are not limited to, preparation and submission of grant applications, fiscal tracking of grants funds, maintaining project files, and collection and submission of deliverables.

2. Non-administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits related to the implementation of the project or program element of the grant/cooperative agreement are not considered administrative costs. None of the salaries and fringe benefit costs related to these functions shall be considered administrative costs. Example:

- The salaries and fringe benefits for technical staff to conduct work to accomplish specific Bay Program goals as outlined in the program or project elements are not administrative costs.

3. Calculation of Administrative Costs

In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, use the format above or a similar format to calculate the costs and include in the Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).

4. Questions Regarding Administrative Costs

The recipients shall direct questions to the EPA Project Officer who will determine what costs should be included as administrative costs on a case-by-case basis.