

OVERVIEW

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

TITLE: Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2021 Request for Applications for Agriculture and Nonpoint Sources Program Support for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications (RFA)

RFA NUMBER: EPA-R3-CBP-21-07

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 66.466

IMPORTANT DATES

June 23, 2021	Issuance of RFA - RFA posted
August 10, 2021	Application Submission Deadline - RFA closes (see Section IV for more information)
September 04, 2021	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
September 20, 2021	Approximate date for applicant to submit federal cooperative agreement application
October 31, 2021	Approximate date of award

EPA will consider all applications that are submitted via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm EST on **August 10, 2021** and consider any applications submitted after the due date as ineligible. EPA will only accept applications submitted via Grants.gov, except in limited circumstances where applicants have no or very limited Internet access (see section IV.).

COVID-19 Update: EPA is providing flexibilities to applicants experiencing challenges related to COVID-19. Please see the **Flexibilities Available to Organizations Impacted by COVID-19** clause in Section IV of EPA's Solicitation Clauses.

SUMMARY

The EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) is announcing a Request for Applications (RFA) for applicants to provide the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partners with an application for technical and programmatic support related to implementation of the agricultural and other nonpoint source components of the Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions' (listed below) Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs). This RFA is seeking cost-effective applications from eligible applicants for supporting state, regional, and local partners, and other non-federal stakeholders to build the institutional and programmatic capacity for accelerated implementation of agricultural conservation and other nonpoint source programs. This work will improve coordination and provide technical and logistical support to the CBP partnership's Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT), the Agriculture Workgroup, and the Watershed Technical

Workgroup. Applications should also include technical and coordination support to the non-federal partners and the appropriate CBP technical workgroups for determining the best means for ensuring all implemented nonpoint source (both agricultural and non-agricultural) best management practices (BMPs) are tracked, verified, reported, and simulated in the suite of CBP partnership models.

CBP partners include the seven watershed jurisdictions, federal agencies, and many non-federal organizations; however, work funded under this RFA will support the seven watershed jurisdictions and other non-federal partners. The seven watershed jurisdictions are Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

To support this activity, the selected applicant will provide staff who, for matters of efficiency, will be located at the U.S. EPA CBPO located in Annapolis, Maryland. Office space will be provided by EPA as in-kind assistance under the cooperative agreement.

FUNDING/AWARDS: This RFA will cover the project and budget periods up to and including six years from an expected start date of **October 31, 2021**. EPA plans to award one cooperative agreement to carry out all activities under this RFA. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$2,520,000 to \$3,000,000 (of which \$169,200 is EPA in-kind contribution), with an estimated \$420,000 to \$500,000 (of which \$28,200 is EPA in-kind contribution) available for the first year and each additional year. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

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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 Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1267, the Chesapeake Bay Program is responsible for supporting the Chesapeake Executive Council through many 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. Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. 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; EPA, representing the federal government; and participating citizen, local government, and scientific and technical advisory groups.

The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the Chesapeake Executive Council (Executive Council). The Executive Council sets the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and uses its leadership to rally public support for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection. The Executive Council also signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection.

The Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) acts as the senior policy advisor to the Executive Council, accepting items for Executive Council 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 provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program. It directs and coordinates all of the Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) and their respective workgroups.

The GITs include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Thus, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and others become active members of the broad restoration partnership.

Much of the work in this RFA will support the WQGIT and its Agriculture Workgroup, Watershed Technical Workgroup, BMP Verification Ad-Hoc Action Team, BMP Expert Panels, and associated subgroups that could include Agriculture Modeling and a Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST) Ad-Hoc Team.

The charge of the WQGIT is to evaluate, focus, and accelerate the implementation of practices, policies, and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to conditions that support living resources and protect human health. The charge of the Agriculture Workgroup is to provide expertise and leadership on development and implementation of policies, programs, and research to reduce pollutant loads delivered from agricultural lands and animal operations to upstream waters and the Chesapeake Bay. Agriculture Workgroup Ad-Hoc Teams can include an Agriculture Modeling Team that provides enhanced agricultural modeling assistance to support recommendations of the Agriculture Workgroup regarding updates to major phases of CAST. The CAST Ad-Hoc Team under the Agriculture Workgroup addresses updates to data sources and methods related to the agriculture sector for CAST.

The charge of the cross-sector Watershed Technical Workgroup is to provide a forum for communication and discussion among the jurisdictions and other CBP participants on technical issues related to BMPs, CAST processes and databases, and management strategy development and implementation.

BMP Expert Panels are convened to develop BMP effectiveness estimates from reviews of the latest science – which is used, in part, in CAST. Since the BMP definitions and values used for the effectiveness estimates have important implications for the CBP and various partners, it is critical that they be developed in a process that is consistent, transparent, and scientifically defensible.

The BMP Verification Ad-Hoc Action Team addresses questions and concerns related to BMP verification implementation and reporting and can revisit components of the CBP partnership's Basinwide BMP Verification Framework.

Pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 117(b)(2), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(b)(2), the CBPO is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the Executive Council in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. The CBPO and Chesapeake Bay Program, both mentioned above, are two distinct entities.

2. 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

On June 16, 2014, the Executive Council signed a new voluntary Chesapeake Bay agreement (referred to as *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* throughout this RFA) that will guide the CBP partnership's work into the future. For the first time, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia signed the agreement as full CBP partners in the overall effort. This agreement is one of the most comprehensive restoration plans developed for the Chesapeake region, providing greater transparency and accountability of all CBP partners. With 10 interrelated goals and 31 outcomes, this watershed-wide accord advances the restoration, conservation, and protection of all the lands and waters within the 64,000-square-mile watershed by promoting sound land use, environmental literacy, stewardship, and a diversity of engaged citizens. Additionally, the goals and outcomes aim to better protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay's living resources, water quality, and vital habitats. The new *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* also recognizes the unique and vital role local governments play and how they are essential to the restoration effort.

This cooperative agreement will help fulfill the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* outcomes under several of the agreement's goals.

3. Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load and Watershed Implementation Plans

EPA has established the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL), a historic and comprehensive “pollution diet” to facilitate implementation of actions to restore clean water to the Chesapeake Bay and the watershed's streams, creeks and rivers.

The Bay TMDL – the largest ever developed by EPA – identifies the levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment across Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia that are necessary to meet applicable state water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay, its tidal tributaries, and embayments. These

pollutant limits were further divided by each of the seven Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions and major river basins based on state-of-the-art modeling tools, extensive monitoring data, peer-reviewed science and close interaction with jurisdictional partners.

Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) are plans for how each of the Bay jurisdictions, in partnership with federal and local governments, will achieve their respective Bay TMDL allocations and planning targets. The Phase I WIPs were developed in 2010 by the jurisdictions to inform the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL wasteload and load allocations. The Phase II WIPs were developed in 2012 by the jurisdictions to meet nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment planning targets based on updated information generated through the Partnership's Phase 5.3.2 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model. The goal of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and supporting jurisdictional WIP process is to implement by 2025 all nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction practices needed to fully restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal rivers.

Through the Bay TMDL Midpoint Assessment, the CBP partnership updated and reviewed the latest science, data, models, and decision support tools to be used in estimating progress in nutrient and sediment pollutant load reductions. Phase III WIPs were developed by jurisdictions based on the results of the Midpoint Assessment, the Phase III WIP planning targets, and new information provided by the Phase 6 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model and related updates of the Chesapeake Bay Airshed Models and the Chesapeake Water Quality and Sediment Transport Model. The Phase III WIPs provide information on actions the seven watershed jurisdictions intend to implement between 2019 and 2025 to meet their respective Bay TMDL goals.

4. Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's Environmental Models

Models of the Chesapeake Bay's airshed, watershed, estuary, and living resources have been developed by the partners and linked together over the past 30 years. The CBP partnership's suite of models assists in understanding the important processes affecting the health of the watershed and the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. These modeling tools provide the CBP partners with an understanding of the effect of various control strategies on pollutant levels and the level of nutrient and sediment load reductions needed to restore the Chesapeake Bay and achieve the applicable water quality standards for dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-a, underwater bay grasses and water clarity. By quantifying the management actions necessary to restore Chesapeake Bay habitats and the living resources dependent on those habitats, these integrated CBP partnership models provide guidance to environmental managers and citizens on where the most cost-effective reductions can be made so that controls are equitable and broadly supported.

Through the application of airshed, watershed, estuarine, and living resource modeling activities, the CBP partnership's state and local jurisdictional partners gain access to information that is used directly in decision-making for Chesapeake Bay environmental restoration efforts. Chesapeake Bay environmental models are developed, calibrated, verified, and applied through an expanding cooperative network of state, federal, regional, and local agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and academic institutional partners. These partnership models help set the pace and direction of Chesapeake Bay restoration by providing information on water quality and biological resource responses to different management actions. One of the key

modeling tools in this effort is CAST, which is a web-based tool that provides estimates of the nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment load reductions achieved by different combinations of BMPs in a particular geographical area. CAST also includes information on the cost of implementing various BMPs so that users can select the most cost-effective practices to reduce pollutant loads. See <https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/About> for more information.

B. Program Goals, Objective, and Scope of Work under Assistance Listing Number 66.466

This RFA is seeking cost-effective applications from eligible applicants for providing the CBP's non-federal partners with support on technical and programmatic issues related to implementation of the agricultural and other nonpoint source components of the jurisdictions' WIPs. Applications should specifically address the need to support state, regional, and local partners, and other non-federal stakeholders to build the institutional and programmatic capacity for accelerated implementation of agricultural conservation and other nonpoint source programs. The programs should be geographically targeted and cost-efficient with effective practices and technologies for reducing nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution. This support should ensure pollutant reduction outcomes result in clear benefits to the agricultural producers and other local landowners. The successful applicant should also evaluate alternative approaches and innovative solutions to build and strengthen partnerships in the agricultural sector.

The work will support the CBP partners' accelerated implementation of the most cost-effective, efficient, and targeted nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment reduction actions on agricultural lands throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Applications should specifically address how the applicant will provide this support through improving coordination and providing technical and logistical support to the CBP partnership's WQGIT, the Agriculture Workgroup, other technical, management and policy committees, and their members' organizations.

Applications should also include technical and coordination support to the non-federal partners and the appropriate CBP workgroups for determining the best means for ensuring all implemented nonpoint source (agricultural and non-agricultural) BMPs are tracked, verified, reported, and simulated in the suite of CBP partnership models. Applications should describe plans for working directly with U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies, state agricultural and environmental agencies, universities, conservation districts, agribusiness, and non-governmental organizations to continually improve access to and the exchange and sharing of agricultural conservation implementation, land use, agricultural animals, and agricultural production related data, respectful of state and federal privacy laws. This work will involve coordinating with CBP partners and stakeholders in developing model data inputs that give the most accurate and defensible characterization of agricultural land use, cropland, animal operations, and nutrient use. This work also includes providing technical and logistical support to the agricultural and other BMP expert panels as directed by the WQGIT, the Agriculture Workgroup, and the Watershed Technical Workgroup.

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 of the cooperative agreement 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 RFA. The non-federal partners of the CBP will provide programmatic direction to the cooperative agreement recipient through the WQGIT and its Agriculture Workgroup and Watershed Technical Workgroup.

EPA plans to award one cooperative agreement to carry out all activities under this RFA. The estimated funding for six years is approximately \$2,520,000 to \$3,000,000 (of which \$169,200 is EPA in-kind contribution, with an estimated \$420,000 to \$500,000 (of which \$28,400 is EPA in-kind contribution) available for the first year and each additional year.

The selected applicant will provide staff who, for matters of efficiency, will be located at the U.S. EPA CBPO located in Annapolis, Maryland. Office space will be provided by EPA as in-kind assistance under the cooperative agreement.

If your organization has an interest in this project, has the skills to accomplish the activities, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit an application. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activities are multi-year projects (up to six years) and the application should have a work plan and budget for the first year, broken out by each activity, and an estimated budget detail for each of the subsequent five years. Please note that the EPA in-kind funding estimated for each activity assumes the recipient will have one staff person for each activity located at the U.S. EPA CBPO office space.

Applicants must address each activity listed below in their application. The expectation is that there is a separate recipient staff person for each activity. Please provide separate budget details for each activity.

Activity 1: Agricultural Programmatic Implementation Support

Estimated Funding Per Year: \$180,000 - \$220,000 (of which \$9,400 per person is EPA in-kind contribution for CBPO space) per year

This activity provides agricultural program implementation support for the WQGIT, its Agriculture Workgroup, and other technical, management and policy committees. This work will support their efforts to accelerate the CBP partners' implementation of the most cost-effective, efficient, and targeted nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction practices and actions on agricultural lands throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The following are examples of the types of activities required to carry out Activity 1. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support. Applicants are encouraged to describe how they would support efforts for building and expanding local, state, and regional agricultural institutional and programmatic capacity necessary for the most efficient and cost-effective sets of nutrient and sediment pollution reduction practices and technologies needed to achieve the agricultural commitments within the jurisdictions' WIPs and two-year milestones.

Support Building and Expanding Agricultural Institutional and Programmatic Capacity

- Directly support efforts by state, regional, local partners, and other stakeholders to build and expand their institutional and programmatic capacity for the implementation of agricultural conservation programs to deliver equal-to or better-than levels defined within the jurisdictions' Phase III WIPs and two-year milestones.
- Provide expert input on the opportunities for using a wide array of academic, programmatic, and policy instruments as the means to support the Chesapeake Bay watershed agricultural community in achieving agricultural goals and outcomes. The opportunities include both non-funding and funding-related with funding being both public and private and including incentive programs in the regulatory and non-regulatory domains.
- Use expanded and enhanced partnerships and understanding of agricultural production and conservation practice implementation to prioritize the challenges to achieving Phase III WIP levels of implementation and to systematically address and work to overcome those challenges.
- Work with state, regional, and local partners to ensure there are policies, programmatic capacity and capabilities, and underlying delivery mechanisms for implementing the most efficient and cost-effective pollutant reduction practices on agricultural lands.

Building and Strengthening Partnerships

- Build and strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders, such as U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies (strictly for the direct benefit of non-federal partners), state agricultural agencies, regional and national agricultural interest and trade groups, research universities, environmental groups, and others to advance well-managed agriculture that protects local and regional waters.
- Regularly communicate the CBP partnership's agricultural programs, policies, regulations, and new directions to these key stakeholders and build in-depth understanding of the CBP stakeholders' interests in order to identify opportunities to coordinate programs and policies that will help advance implementation of conservation approaches and farming techniques to address key agricultural environmental challenges in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Enhanced Access to and Sharing of Agricultural Data and Information

- Work with U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies (strictly for the direct benefit of non-federal partners), state agricultural agencies, universities, conservation districts, agribusiness, and non-governmental organizations to continually improve access to agricultural data and improve the exchange of data for agricultural conservation implementation, land use, animal populations and manure characteristics, chemical fertilizer use (farm and non-farm), management of nutrient applications to crops, soil phosphorus levels, and agricultural production. Data shared with the selected applicant will conform to state and federal privacy laws which is typically not sharing data specific to individual agricultural producers.
- Design and carrying out research projects, data collection, and data analysis among the broad range of stakeholders involved in agricultural production and conservation implementation.

- Work towards timely and routine sharing of data and information, with a focus on consistency across state and local jurisdictions, to ensure the best data is used in the partnership's shared decision-making processes.
- Help close the CBP partnership's identified gaps in agricultural data among programs and modeling tools.
- This objective will require frequent discussions and meetings with signatory and at-large program partners responsible for the research, collection, and verification of agricultural data in an effort to better integrate new agricultural data and improve its systematic use over time.

Provide Direct Technical Support to Improve Jurisdictions' Ability to Target Resources Towards Planning, Implementing, and Verifying Agricultural Practices and Programs

- Utilize the many data and modeling tools designed and maintained by a multi-disciplinary team at the CBPO to coordinate the development of, and access to, agricultural research, technical data, and analyses that will enable partners to target resources in the most cost-effective manner possible.
- Focus efforts on partnership-identified challenges to agricultural conservation implementation. This includes research and literature reviews as well as analyses of data about agricultural production, its effect on nutrient and sediment loads, and possible mitigation strategies.
- In addition, focus efforts on the CBP partners' need to understand, evaluate, and utilize trends in tidal and non-tidal monitoring data in their decision-making process to accelerate effective implementation of BMPs. The intent is to connect monitored trends in nutrient and sediment loads in agriculture-dominated watershed to BMP implementation and changing watershed conditions, e.g., changes in manure and chemical fertilizer use.
- Serve as a technical resource to a multi-disciplinary team at CBPO and to the jurisdictions to assist with achieving the agricultural verification objectives of the CBP partnership-approved BMP verification protocols. Support efforts to improve BMP data submitted by each jurisdiction so that it better represents changes in new on-the-ground management actions through time. Advise CBP office staff in the annual analysis of implementation data and the conveyance of findings to the jurisdictions. Guide the jurisdictions in the establishment of new or revised verification protocols that meet the intent of BMP verification including, if relevant, training on inspection methods that are consistent across time and space.

Evaluate Alternative Approaches and Innovative Solutions

- Evaluate alternative approaches and innovative solutions for accelerating agricultural nutrient and sediment reductions based on the best and latest science and research.
- Apply an in-depth understanding of state and federal restoration programs, the effectiveness of BMPs in those programs, and the tools used to measure and close gaps in pollutant reduction goals – to advance agricultural conservation.
- Identify and collaborate with key partners and stakeholders to advance innovative solutions to the critical agricultural challenges facing the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Provide Assistance to Chesapeake Bay Program Agricultural Organizations

- Ensure the CBP partnership's Agriculture Workgroup and its supporting technical groups, subgroups, and Expert Panels are getting the level of technical, coordination, and logistical support they are requesting.
- Regularly and proactively reach out to local, state, and regional agricultural agencies, interest groups, agribusinesses, and environmental groups to facilitate discussion and collaboration with the CBP partnership about agricultural concerns, opportunities, and needs.

Communicate Agricultural Research and Technical Findings to Partners and Stakeholder Groups

- Communicate and disseminate agricultural research and the data to improve the understanding of agricultural implementation progress towards meeting the CBP partnership's water quality goals.
- Communicate directly with CBP leadership committees (Principals' Staff Committee and Management Board) and advisory committees (Citizens, Local Government, and Scientific and Technical) regarding programmatic opportunities and challenges facing the Chesapeake Bay watershed's agricultural communities in advancing well-managed agricultural operations to protect local and regional water resources.
- On a continuing basis, proactively communicate the CBP partnership's assessments of agricultural trends (and their impact on water quality) to local, state, and regional agricultural agencies, interest groups, agribusinesses, and environmental groups.
- Work with the CBP partnership's Communications Workgroup and Communications Office to ensure that the Chesapeake Bay watershed agricultural community's successes, challenges, and innovative approaches are being communicated to audiences targeted by the Communications Workgroup.

Represent the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership in Local, Regional, and National Forums

- Communicate CBP partnership agricultural policies, programs, goals, commitments, protocols, initiatives, and new directions at national, regional, and local agriculture conferences, workshops, forums, and meetings.
- Regularly participate in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's State Technical Committee meetings to support the work of non-federal partners.

Activity 2: Support for Nonpoint Source Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership

Estimated Funding Per Year: \$120,000 - \$140,000 (of which \$9,400 is EPA in-kind contribution per person for CBPO space) per year

This activity generally provides nonpoint source program implementation support to the CBP partnership through assistance with technical, management, and policy issues. The work will assist the jurisdictions' efforts to expand programmatic capacity and accelerate the CBP partners' implementation of the most cost-effective, efficient, and targeted nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction actions in the nonpoint source sector.

The following are examples of the types of activities required to carry out Activity 2. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support. Applicants are encouraged to describe how they would support efforts for building and

expanding local, state, and regional institutional and programmatic capacity necessary for the most cost-efficient pollution reduction practices and technologies needed to achieve the nonpoint source commitments within the jurisdictions' WIPs and two-year milestones.

Expand Partners' Programmatic Capacity to Achieve Phase III WIP and Two-Year Milestone Implementation Levels

- Design and carry out evaluations of partners' programs and policies as they relate to implementation levels described within the jurisdictions' WIPs and two-year milestones. This task will require frequent communication with each jurisdiction as plans are developed, assessed, and executed.
- Provide the CBPO and larger partnership with evaluations of gaps in programs, policies, regulations, incentives, funding, and financing that could delay implementation progress and then work directly with jurisdictions to formulate programmatic strategies to close these gaps. The work will initially focus on closing implementation gaps in Pennsylvania, including assistance with developing and executing County Action Plans and other technical and programmatic needs of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. However, this activity will also support other jurisdictions and stakeholder groups in need of assistance.
- Assist stakeholders in the development and running of management scenarios on CAST and effectively communicate inputs and outputs so that evaluations of the cause-and-effect relationships of management options and loading reductions are understandable. Provide technical support to as to how changes to each of the parameters in the environment (land use types and acres, manure and chemical fertilizer applications, BMPs, septic system and wastewater discharges, etc.) affect the outcomes.
- Ensure CBP partners, interested parties, and the public have access to the primary and synthesized Chesapeake Bay nonpoint source-related data.

Provide Technical Support to Improve Jurisdictions' Ability to Plan for what? and Implement Practices in Hydrologically Important Areas

- Utilizing the many data and modeling tools designed and maintained by a multi-disciplinary team at CBP, coordinate technical analyses that will enable partners to target their practices in the most cost-effective manner and location possible. Analyses will be focused on gaps in current implementation and offer potential nutrient and sediment pollutant reduction strategies to expand implementation in hydrologically important areas. The task will require coordination with CBPO colleagues to build in additional functionality and data visualization of information from models, monitoring programs, and other decision-support tools.

Expand the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's Use of Non-Tidal and Tidal Water Quality and Biological Resource Monitoring Data to Evaluate Implementation Progress and Effectiveness

- Work directly with USGS, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, Upper Susquehanna, Coalition, and other state and academic partners responsible for collecting and understanding in-stream, real-time nutrient and sediment monitoring data in an effort to improve assessments of water quality progress, their connections to BMP implementation, and changing watershed conditions.

- Compile trends in water quality improvement or degradation in the major tributaries and sub-basins throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This task will require knowledge of USGS monitoring data and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Data Dashboard so that the information on the status and trends in watershed and estuary conditions can be clearly communicated, and updates can be tailored for specific stakeholder groups. The purpose is to relay the trend information to improve watershed management decisions and planning.
- In explaining trends, the successful applicant should factor in the historical changes in agricultural conservation practices; changes in land use, animal populations and manure, chemical fertilizer use; fluxes from atmospheric deposition of nitrogen, and a host of other watershed characteristics that change through time.

Communicate Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's Technical Findings to Partners and Stakeholder Groups to Improve Evaluations of Nonpoint Source Implementation Progress

- Communicate CBP technical analyses to the broader public, partners, and stakeholders. This task will require participation and presentation of technical findings at meetings across the Chesapeake Bay region. The technical material includes information about Chesapeake Bay environmental models, the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, WIPs, two-year milestones, and water quality monitoring trends. The audience includes many types of stakeholders such as local public organizations, watershed groups, agribusiness, and industries in the developed sector. This will require coordination with the CBP partnership's multi-disciplinary technical teams as well as with the CBP's Communication Office.

Develop, Evaluate, and Communicate Jurisdictions' Annual Implementation Progress

- Assist in obtaining state and national data of watershed conditions needed for the annual model assessment of progress towards goals including – but not limited to – the latest chemical fertilizer sales and/or land use data.
- To ensure reported implementation data better reflects on-the-ground levels and changes in management actions through time, assist in conducting reviews of jurisdictions' BMP Verification Program Plans (aka Quality Assurance Program Plans; QAPP) and their connection to reported BMPs for the annual model assessment.
- Participate in the continual collaborative process of enhancing BMP verification programs through regular review of the jurisdictions' QAPPs, noting both strengths and weaknesses through correspondence with partners.

Support Technical Outreach and Assistance to Jurisdictions' Development and Implementation of Restoration Activities

- Contribute to the CBPO's efforts to extend outreach and assistance to the jurisdictions. Specific tasks are to coordinate the work among the scientific and technical staffs of federal and state agencies, grantees, and contractors – and engage in technical working sessions. This could include setting up meetings, identifying key staff and partners to participate (e.g., state agencies, local partner representatives, and funding distributors), and scheduling follow-up meetings.
- Increase the pool of users and the effectiveness of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Data Dashboard to assist in the development and execution of restoration activities.

- Fulfill information requests using data reported by jurisdictions, and the inputs and outputs of CAST, that estimates changes in pollutant loads to local waters and the estuary, based on a wealth of time- and spatially-variable data about the watershed's characteristics including changes in the implementation of practices and control technologies.
- Serve on a technical advisory committee for piloting a new BMP mapping tool developed by the Chesapeake Conservancy, Chesapeake Commons, and Drexel University to improve localized targeted planning and implementation of BMPs to enhance BMP performance and maximize the efficient use of limited resources. The project and tool would facilitate outreach to local landowners for possible project initiation as well as track and report BMPs.
- Assist with efforts by state and federal agencies, advocacy groups, and private industry to develop and expand a Farm Conservation Certification program in the jurisdictions, beginning with Pennsylvania. The development process includes engaging farmers through their most trusted technical assistance providers, agriculture retail, and the conservation district network. If successful, the program will increase farmer participation, sustainability, and profitability, while providing measurable soil, air, and water quality improvements to the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Activity 3: Agriculture Workgroup Coordination

Estimated Funding Per Year: \$120,000- \$140,000 (of which \$9,400 is EPA in-kind contribution per person for CBPO space) per year

This activity provides support to accelerate the implementation of the agricultural conservation practices by all involved parties working with the WQGIT and, specifically, its Agriculture Workgroup.

The successful applicant will support efforts by the non-federal CBP partner agencies, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholders to utilize the Agriculture Workgroup and related workgroups as forums for collaboration. This will include but not be limited to the development of programs, policies, and decision-making efforts by the individual jurisdictions to successfully carry out their WIPs and meet their two-year milestones. Primary focus of the Agriculture workgroup should be on new on-the-ground implementation of practices and programs and continued inspection and maintenance of existing BMPs.

The successful applicant will collaborate with federal, state, and academic researchers, extension agents, and scientists to analyze emerging agricultural nutrient and sediment reduction technologies and research. The objective is to determine their ability to contribute to achieving CBP partnership water quality goals and to identify the best approaches for accelerating pollutant reductions.

The following are examples of the types of activities required to carry out Activity 3. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support. Applicants are encouraged to describe how they would support the actions and activities of the WQGIT's Agriculture Workgroup.

Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Agriculture Workgroup Coordination

- Directly support the work of the Agriculture Workgroup's chairperson as coordinator.
- Provide leadership in the development and implementation of workgroup strategies for meeting the agricultural nutrient and sediment reductions goals, coordinating partner efforts to meet those goals and evaluating progress in meeting those strategies.
- Identify discussion topics and future agenda items for a forward-looking, rolling schedule of Agriculture Workgroup meetings and conference calls that reflect the Agriculture Workgroup's and the larger CBP partnership's priorities.
- Oversee the development of Agriculture Workgroup meeting agendas, presentations, advance briefing materials, issues and options papers, and meeting summaries.
- Provide a forum for discussion, exchange of information, and evaluation among federal, state, and local agencies, conservation districts, universities, agri-business, and the corporate sector on sustainable and cost-effective agricultural production systems that benefit water and air quality.
- Augment and maintain representation on the Agriculture Workgroup of federal and state agricultural agencies; federal, state and county conservation agencies engaged with agricultural management; agribusiness and other non-governmental organizations related to agriculture; and academic institutions to provide an expanded expertise in agricultural production, sciences, and programs.
- Proactively follow through on actions and next steps agreed to by the Agriculture Workgroup to ensure the priority work proceeds between scheduled meetings.
- Serve as spokesperson for the Agriculture Workgroup to agricultural stakeholders and the agricultural community for improving communication, comprehension, and information support for CAST and other decision support tools.
- Serve as an Agriculture Workgroup representative on the WQGIT and associated workgroups, teams, and committees.
- Serve as the Agriculture Workgroup's representative for the development and implementation of WQGIT- and Agriculture Workgroup-sponsored workshops and conferences related to agriculture.
- Lead or assist with public field days, meetings, conferences, symposiums, workshops, etc., related to agricultural production systems; marketing and economics; and conservation practices and programs to provide educational opportunities for achieving improved water quality.
- Serve as an agricultural technical resource to the CBP partnership on regional and state agricultural production systems and programs within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, especially nutrient management and animal agriculture programs.

Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Collaboration and BMP Expert Panel and Ad Hoc Group Support

- Coordinate with the Agriculture Workgroup and the WQGIT to convene expert panels or ad hoc groups to develop recommendations of BMP definitions and effectiveness values that are new to modeling. As required under the CBP partnership's BMP protocol process, this information will need to be approved through the WQGIT.
- Convene BMP expert panels and ad hoc groups and staff those meetings.

- Assist the BMP expert panels and BMP ad hoc groups by helping ensure the groups' recommended BMP efficiencies, data requirements for reporting, and BMP verification protocols are compatible with what agency sources can provide and the CBP partnership's suite of management and tracking tools can model and relay.
- Consult with the CBP partnership workgroups and member agencies for information about BMPs, treatments, and technologies being investigated by the Expert Panels and ad hoc groups.
- Interview scientists and/or practitioners identified as lead researchers/implementers by the respective CBP partnership workgroups for specific BMPs, treatment processes, and reduction technologies regarding their knowledge about specific practices being investigated.
- Conduct scientific literature searches to aid in the development of new or revised practice definitions and effectiveness values. Compile all available information for each BMP, treatment process, or reduction technology identified by the expert review panel and BMP ad hoc group.
- Consult with the CBP Modeling Workgroup and the supporting CBPO Modeling Team to identify how each practice will be simulated in the applicable CBP partnership's models and other decision support tools.
- Assist the BMP expert panels and ad hoc groups in determining which data should be used to develop loading and effectiveness estimates.
- Document the recommendations developed by the BMP expert panels and ad hoc groups, addressing the elements listed in the CBP partnership's BMP Expert Panel Protocols.
- Provide support and technical interpretation for workgroup and WQGIT approval of BMP expert panel and ad hoc group recommendations. This could include writing technical appendices.
- Review and approve how BMPs are simulated in CAST to ensure that the assumptions accurately reflect real-world conditions, are consistent and equitable among the different sectors, and reflect the CBP partnership's decisions based on the recommendations of each BMP expert panel and ad hoc group.

Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Agricultural Programs Technical Support

- Provide technical coordination and support to the Agriculture Workgroup and its subgroups for developing recommendations for the improved tracking, reporting, and verification of agricultural conservation practice implementation throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Work to improve how jurisdictions and agencies track, report, and verify BMPs and other agricultural data – and ensure the information accurately reflects real-world conditions and are consistent and equitable among the different sectors.
- Support ongoing efforts to continually improve cost and effectiveness estimates for agricultural conservation practices based on the latest scientific, implementation, and economic data.
- Assist in the evaluation of agricultural production, practice, and land use inputs in CAST and supporting tools, and how agricultural conservation practices are modeled to ensure accurate representation of agricultural loads and projected nutrient/sediment reductions from reported implementation. Work could include support to a reestablished CBP Agricultural Modeling Subcommittee (AMS) tasked with analyzing nonpoint source data

inputs and developing the next version of CAST. This could involve: drafting agendas; preparing materials in advance of meetings; collecting and analyzing various datasets to better describe nonpoint source pollution across the Chesapeake Bay watershed; working closely with CBPO contractors and grantees to ensure that the methods described by the AMS are adequately captured in draft versions of CAST; and providing regular updates regarding AMS decisions to various CBP workgroups and the WQGIT.

- In the Agriculture Workgroup, focus on the CBP partners' need to understand, evaluate, and utilize trends in tidal and non-tidal monitoring data in their decision-making process to accelerate effective implementation of BMPs. The intent is to use monitoring data to improve assessments of water quality progress, its connection to agricultural BMP implementation, and changing watershed conditions in the agricultural sector.
- Assist the CBP partnership in developing materials and tools to strengthen the relationship and understanding of agricultural conservation implementation levels with the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Lead the Agriculture Workgroup on efforts to update or add any agricultural BMP verification protocols as documented in "Strengthening Verification of Best Management Practices Implemented in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: A Basin-wide Framework." Ultimately, ensure additions and updates to the protocols improve the reasonable assurance of whether practices are implemented properly and remain functional and the reliability and quality of reported information so that it better represents changes in new on-the-ground management actions through time.
- Assist the CBP partnership with the continuing development and implementation of the National Environmental Information Exchange Network to improve the exchange of agricultural BMP data.

Obtaining Additional Information

For additional background information on CBP achievements and the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement commitments, see the CBP partnership's website located at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/>.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs

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 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, accessible at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>).

1. Linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan

The overall objective of this competition is to provide technical and programmatic support for the CBP partnership in order to advance jurisdictional implementation of two-year milestones and WIPs and, ultimately, achieve water-quality restoration goals and maintain public awareness of Chesapeake Bay restoration. This includes improving on the accuracy of assessments of progress towards these goals and reporting progress findings to the public. The process involves adaptively managing objectives and tasks according to the effectiveness of prior accomplishments in the agreement as well as among jurisdictional partner agencies that are being supported. Ultimately, execution of the cooperative agreement will increase partner efforts in evaluating and guiding future targeted pollutant load reduction activities and other implementation actions toward reaching the goals and outcomes of the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* under Section 117(d)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The activity to be funded under this announcement supports [EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan](#). The award made under this announcement will support Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment and Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water Goal of the EPA Strategic Plan. All applications must be for projects that support the goal and objective identified above.

[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 priorities described above.

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. Expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement may include the following:

- Increased number of targeted cost-effective nutrient- and sediment-reducing agricultural conservation practices and other nonpoint source BMPs implemented.
- Increased number of agricultural conservation practices and other nonpoint source BMPs tracked, verified, and reported by the six Chesapeake Bay watershed states and the District of Columbia.
- Increased number of new, CBP partnership-approved nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment load-reduction BMP efficiencies or values for new or existing BMPs or other pollutant control treatments or technologies applied to agricultural and other lands within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Increased incorporation of local-scale, agricultural-related and other nonpoint source inputs into CAST leading to better simulation of agricultural and other nonpoint source inputs and the resulting nutrient and sediment pollutant loads.
- Increased emphasis on communicating trends in non-tidal and tidal monitoring information as a measure of progress towards goals.

- Increased communication with and collaboration among federal and state agricultural agencies, regional and national agricultural interest and trade groups, research universities, and environmental and advocacy groups.
- Progress reports – with a full accounting of accomplishments for each activity – and a final report will also be required outputs, as specified in Section VI(C) of this announcement, “Reporting Requirement.”

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. **An example outcome under this application could include the following:**

- Expanded and accelerated implementation of BMPs for reducing nonpoint sources of nutrients and sediment on the ground due to adaptive changes in local, state, and federal BMP delivery programs.
- Long-term behavior changes in the Chesapeake Bay watershed farming community measured by increased implementation of priority agricultural conservation practices that have maximum nutrient and sediment load reduction efficiencies in designated priority watersheds.
- Increased confidence in, and more complete accounting within, CAST as a tool for both watershed implementation planning and tracking of progress toward BMP and loading goals.
- Improved ability by jurisdictional and other partners to evaluate the relative effectiveness of implemented or planned management practices toward improving stream, river, and tidal water quality conditions.

D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

This cooperative agreement is made pursuant to Clean Water Act 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. 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. Environmental Justice Considerations

Environmental justice considerations are important to this project. EPA defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of

environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>). The economic, social, environmental, and health benefits of a restored Chesapeake Bay are for the good of all citizens of the watershed. The project should advance equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. Applications will be evaluated on how well environmental justice considerations are addressed (see Section V).

Applicants for the cooperative agreement “Agriculture and Nonpoint Sources Program Support for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership” should address the disproportionate and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Applications will be evaluated, as appropriate, on: How the project benefits these communities and/or populations; the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project; and how the project will benefit such communities and/or populations that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above.

Environmental Justice Web-based Screening Tool - Applicants are encouraged to include data from EPA’s EJSCREEN tool (or other EJ-focused geospatial mapping tools) as part of their application to help characterize and describe the affected communities/populations and area(s). Data from other sources (e.g. studies, census, and third-party reports) should also be included to give a more complete picture of the impacted communities and populations. Instructions, resources, and tutorials on how to use EJSCREEN are at [Learn to Use EJSCREEN](#).

F. 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). A list of these schools can be found at [Historically Black Colleges and Universities at: https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/one-hundred-and-five-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/](https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/one-hundred-and-five-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 at <https://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/tribes-tcus/tribal-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 at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/ides/hsi-eligibles-2016.pdf>;

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

II: AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

The U.S EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office plans to award one cooperative agreement under this RFA. Funding for all activities listed above as a composite is approximately \$420,000 to \$500,000 annually (of which \$28,200 is EPA in-kind contribution) for FY2022 through FY2027, depending on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$2,520,000 to \$3,000,000 (of which \$169,200 is EPA in-kind contribution).

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award under this announcement or less than the estimated funding amounts above. **Funding for the activity 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 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 five months after the original selection decision.

B. Award Type

The award will be issued in the form of a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of “substantial involvement” as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient’s performance; collaboration during the performance of the

scope of work; in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.317 and 2 C.F.R. 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. 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. This participation is expected to include involvement through the 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 efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its surrounding watershed.

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 a project, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice the applicant or affect the basis upon which the application or portion thereof was evaluated and selected for award and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is six 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 31, 2021.**

E. Pre-Award Costs

The recipient may incur otherwise eligible and allowable pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award at their own risk without prior approval of EPA's award official. Pre-award costs must comply with 2 C.F.R. 200.458 and 2 C.F.R. 1500.8. If EPA determines that the requested pre-award costs comply with the relevant authorities, and that the costs are justified as allocable to the project, then these costs may be included as allowable expenditures at the time that the assistance award document is prepared.

However, if for any reason EPA does not fund the application or the amount of the award is less than the applicant anticipated, then EPA is under no obligation to reimburse the applicant for these costs incurred. Thus, applicants incur pre-award costs at their own risk. Costs incurred more than 90 days prior to award require the approval of EPA Region 3's grant official.

III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit organizations, State and local governments, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies are eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA. For-profit organizations are not eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA.

B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

Pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 117(d)(2)(A), 33 U.S.C. 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 five to fifty 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 five 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. This 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 five percent match will be met will be rejected.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Only applications from eligible entities (see Section III.A above) that meet the following threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the criteria in Section V.B. Applicants must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified in writing 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 announcement or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the project narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
2. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.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 application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.
3. Applications 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](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with

James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov (see Section VII, Agency Contact) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application(s) not being reviewed.

4. The project funded under this announcement must be linked to the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.
5. Applications must show how they will meet the five percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B.
6. Applications requesting more than the maximum funding amount listed in the range for the applicable activity will be rejected.
7. Applicants must address all three the activities listed in Section I.B
8. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.
9. The application must provide separate budget details for each activity.

IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain an Application Package

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from the application package associated with this opportunity on [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov).

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Each application will be evaluated using the criteria referenced in Section V.B. of this announcement. You must submit a single-spaced project narrative of up to 15 pages in length by the date and time specified in Section IV.C below. Excess pages will not be reviewed. The format for this application is contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the application. Applications that are not prepared in substantial compliance with the requirements in Appendix A will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

The application package **must** include all of the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

2. **SF-424A, Budget Information** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown in Section A on Line 5(e) and on Line 6.k of Column (1) of Section B while recipient's total cost-share should be shown in Section A on Line 5(f) and Line 6.k of Column (2) of Section B. The amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
3. **EPA Form 4700-4, Pre award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance**
4. **EPA Key Contacts Form**
5. **Project Narrative Attachment Form** – The format for the project narrative and the budget narrative are contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the application.
6. **Budget Narrative Attachment Form** - The budget detail 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. Please refer to EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment's budget detail guidance and IDC guidance located at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02> and <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02>, respectively.

Requirements for Project Narrative — See Appendix A

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 on 8.5" x 11" paper. Note that the **15** pages include all supporting materials such as resumes or *curriculum vitae* and letters of support. Documentation for the budget detail, non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, and the SF-424 and SF-424A forms are **not** included in the page limit.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Please review the Intergovernmental Review clause included as part of the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). This program is eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372, An Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. See this link for information and instructions: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-region-3-grants-and-audit-management-branch-intergovernmental-review-process-and-single>. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your application is selected for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority

Grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirements for “Administrative Costs” under the Section 117 (d)(4) of the Clean Water Act, 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.

Allowable Costs

EPA assistance agreement funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Federal funds may not be used for cost sharing for other federal grants (except where authorized by statute), lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles. During the grant negotiation, any ineligible costs outlined in the application (i.e. lobbying activities) will be excluded in the final grant award.

E. Grants.gov Submission Instructions

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

Applicants must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under this funding opportunity based on the [Grants.gov](https://www.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

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](https://www.grants.gov), go to [Grants.gov](https://www.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 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](https://www.grants.gov), [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov), and DUNS number assignment

is FREE. Please see RAIN-2021-G01 for information about EPA's implementation of the upcoming Government-wide transition from DUNS to Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose DUNS is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS 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](https://www.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](https://www.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-R3-CBP-21-06, or the Assistance Listing number that applies to the announcement (66.466), in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

Please Note: All applications must now be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) using the "Workspace" feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the [Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page](https://www.grants.gov/workspace).

Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than **August 10, 2021 at 11:59 PM EST**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all of the application materials described below using the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) application package accessed using the instructions above.

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact James Hargett, at hargett.james@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

The application package **must** include all of the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email

address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

2. **SF-424A, Budget Information** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
3. **EPA Form 4700-4, Pre award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance**
4. **EPA Key Contacts Form**
5. **Project Narrative Attachment Form** – The format for the project narrative including the budget detail are contained in Appendix A to the RFA.

3. Technical Issues with Submission

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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 James Hargett with the FON in the subject line. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to [Grants.gov](https://www.sam.gov/SAM/) or relevant <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> 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.

If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to [Grants.gov](https://www.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.

d. 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 hargett.james@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.

e. 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 James Hargett 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.

V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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 of interest.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

The evaluation criteria below apply to this RFA.

Criteria	Points
1. Organizational Capability, Scope and Approach: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application on:	30

a. How well the application demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience in the proposed activities under Section I.B. (15 points) b. The quality of the application and how it demonstrates the ability to timely and successfully achieve the relevant activities to support the CBP partners as described in Section I.B., regardless of whether the application encompasses one of the examples provided or puts forth an alternative approach that achieves the goal of each respective activity. (15 points)	
2. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, considering the applicant's: a. Past performance in successfully completing and managing assistance agreements identified in their 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 three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements). (5 points). b. History of meeting the reporting requirements under assistance agreements identified in their project narrative, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable, final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not; (5 points) c. Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project; and (5 points) d. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff skills and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (15 points) Note: In evaluating applicants under items a. and b. of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items a. and b. above--a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.	30

3. Environmental Justice: As noted in the discussion of Environmental Justice Considerations, Section I.E., applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will effectively address the disproportionate and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and, if applicable, other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions. As part of this evaluation, applications will be evaluated on how the project benefits these communities and/or populations; the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project; and how the project will benefit such communities and/or populations that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above. (10 points)	10
4. 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. (10 points)	10
5. 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 gather information and lessons learned from the project <u>and</u> transfer that documentation/information/ data/results/recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders across the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner. (5 points)	5
6. Successful Transition: Applicants will be evaluated based on how well they can become fully functional in the roles described in the announcement once a cooperative agreement is awarded and how well the applicant will bring about a successful transition in the provision of the described support to the CBP partnership and its management structure. (5 points)	5
7. 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. (5 points)	5
8. 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. (5 points).	5

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 for the activity to the director or deputy director of CBPO for final selection. EPA expects to select one application, covering the three activities as a composite, described in Section I for funding. In making the final funding decisions, 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.

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 applications 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 and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that applicants will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around **September 04, 2021** either via email or U.S. Postal Service. 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 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 provides assistance 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, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. Any information about general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/>

Incurred Costs

Funding eligibility ends on the date specified in the award. The time expended, and costs incurred in either the development of the application or the final assistance application, or in any subsequent discussions or negotiations prior to the award, are neither reimbursable nor recognizable as part of the recipient's cost share.

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Section 1500.11, 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 QA/R-2: EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans (refer to <https://www.epa.gov/quality/epa-qar-2-epa-requirements-quality-management-plans>, Chapter 2).

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 Quality Assurance Project Plan (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. Requirements for QAPPs can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/quality/template-developing-generic-quality-assurance-project-plan-or-plan-elements-model>.

Deliverables

Awarded applicant will be required to provide a chart or list of deliverables, providing items and due dates.

C. Reporting

Quarterly or semiannual progress reports, as determined by the federal project officer, will be required as a condition of this 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 [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, 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.

F. 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 applications 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.

G. 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 § 200.338](#) including suspension and debarment.

VII: AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact James Hargett via email at hargett.james@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-R3-CBP-21-07). 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.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Management Strategies
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement

CBP STAR Strategic Science & Research Needs Online Database:
<https://star.chesapeakebay.net/>

Electronic copy of the *CBP Guidance for Data Management*

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/201601/documents/attachment8cimsgrant_guidance.pdf

Electronic copy of the *Chesapeake Bay Program Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance*

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

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
Project Narrative Format
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III
Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2021 Request for Applications (RFA) for
Agriculture and Nonpoint Sources Program Support for the Chesapeake Bay Program
Partnership
EPA-R3-CBP-21-07

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

- A. **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. The project narrative must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 15-page limit includes all supporting materials, resumes or *curriculum vitae*, and letters of support but **excludes** the budget detail, documentation of non-profit status, and other forms as listed in Section IV. F. Applicants must ensure that the project narrative clearly identifies the activity number. 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) DUNS number — See Section VI of RFA.

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 of the Program as described in Section I of the announcement for the relevant activity.
 - ii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the application will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project and your plan for tracking and measuring your progress towards achieving them.
1. **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. Expected outputs from the activities to be funded under this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.

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 under this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.

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) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three 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 addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project as well as your staff's expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

B. Budget Narrative - Use the Budget Narrative Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a separate budget narrative breakdown for each activity listed in Section I by the major budget categories (i.e. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). For the overall project budget, include the cost-share amount (a minimum of five percent) 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 the Clean Water Act 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: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet. To calculate the specific cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

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

**Appendix B
EPA-R3-CBP-21-07**

**SAMPLE
(DO NOT SUBMIT WORKSHEET WITH APPLICATION)**

**CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST
CAP WORKSHEET**

INSTRUCTIONS: In accordance with Section 117(d)(4) and 117(e)(6) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the costs of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under Section 117(d) or 117(e) of the CWA 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 page 2 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, grantees applying for Chesapeake Bay Program grants/cooperative agreements under Section 117 (d) or (e) must adhere to the requirement on administrative costs as follows:

Under 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 Section 117(d)(4) - Administrative Costs. - Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Under 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 Section 117 (d) and (e) of the Clean Water Act.

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)**. One hundred percent 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
- 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 grantees 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.