

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wastewater Management

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2015 Training Workshop Support Activities for NPDES Program

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWM –15-01

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.436

Dates: Proposals must be received **electronic submission via Grants.gov by 11:59 PM EST November 2, 2015**. Questions about this Request for Proposals must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **October 21, 2015**. Written responses will be posted on EPA’s web site at:
<http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/npdes/NPDES-Training-Courses-and-Workshops.cfm>

Following EPA’s evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal have been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

Note to Applicants: If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your proposal to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at
http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for delivery of national training workshops to build the capacity of permitting authorities to implement the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. The two training workshop support activities identified in this announcement are: Activity I, plan, prepare, and provide technical support for National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops; and Activity II, plan, prepare, and provide technical support for National NPDES and Nutrient Workshops. Funds awarded under this announcement for either of the two training workshop support activities may be used to promote participation and to support travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend the workshops.

Both training workshop support activities support the following goal of the EPA Strategic Plan: EPA Strategic Plan: Goal 2: Protecting America’s Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. Information on the EPA Strategic Plan is available at
<http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/fy-2014-2018-strategic-plan>.

States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories, possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and

colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public or private non-profit institutions are eligible to apply. Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. As discussed in Section I.D, funding for assistance agreements awarded under this RFP is provided under the authority of Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The total amount of federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$890,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that two awards will be made under this announcement: one award for the National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops (Activity I); and one award for the National NPDES and Nutrient Workshops (Activity II). It is anticipated that the award for the National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops will be \$255,000, to be incrementally funded up to \$51,000 per year over a five year project period. It is anticipated that the award for the National NPDES and Nutrient Workshops will be \$635,000, to be incrementally funded on average at \$127,000 per year (with some variation based on the meetings scheduled each year) over a five year project period.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. BACKGROUND

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for delivery of national training workshops to build the capacity of permitting authorities to implement the NPDES program. Permitting authorities may include states, territories, or tribes. Currently 46 states and one territory are authorized to implement the NPDES program. Hereafter “permitting authorities” will refer to these entities. The two training workshop support activities identified in this announcement are: (Activity I) plan, prepare, and provide technical support for five National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops; and (Activity II) plan, prepare, and provide technical support for three biennial National NPDES Workshops and up to seven Nutrient Workshops. Funds awarded under this announcement for either of the two training workshop support activities may be used to promote participation and to support travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend the meetings/workshops.

As discussed in Section I.D, funding for assistance agreements awarded under this RFP is provided under the authority of Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA.

B. TRAINING WORKSHOP SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Each proposal submitted under this announcement must address one, and only one, of the two training workshops support activities (i.e., Activity 1: National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops **or** Activity 2: National NPDES and Nutrients Workshops) described below. Applicants may submit more than one complete project proposal package (including SF 424, SF 424A, and Proposal Narrative) under this announcement as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses only **one** training workshop support activity. The cover page of each proposal package must clearly indicate the training workshop support activity addressed in the

proposal. Proposals that address more than one training workshop support activity will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed.

Activity I: National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement under this training workshop support activity for a total available funding of approximately \$255,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for the award will be five years and that the award will be incrementally funded up to \$51,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for five annual national workshops. The annual workshops should alternate topics each year, and consist of two pretreatment and three stormwater – focused workshops.

The project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage the stormwater and pretreatment national workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. However, the project components described do support the proposal review and selection criteria in Section V.A., and may provide guidance as applicants decide what activities will be needed to successfully support the training workshops. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional project components that may not be included in the announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The target audience for the National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops is expected to include primarily permitting authority personnel and may also include local and regional officials, stakeholders, and national experts. An estimated 50-75 participants are expected to attend each national workshop, approximately 75% permitting authority staff, 20% EPA staff, and 5% non-permitting authority/non-federal. Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The overall goals of the National Stormwater Workshops are:

- To facilitate information sharing between permitting authorities and EPA on pivotal topics in the municipal, construction, and industrial stormwater permitting program;
- To improve the quality of stormwater permits;
- To engage with stormwater coordinators on program visioning; and
- To share lessons learned and innovative advances in stormwater.

The overall goals of the National Pretreatment Workshops are:

- To engage with leaders the permitting authorities on program vision and managing complex policy issues relevant to the national pretreatment program; and
- To offer technical training and assistance to permitting authorities on a wide variety of NPDES and pretreatment and related program areas.

Meetings on both topics should focus on issues of broad national concern and may be general or topic specific. The types of issues that should be addressed in these meetings include, but are not limited to: roles and responsibilities, program streamlining and use of technology, permitting and oversight of industries for which the EPA or permitting authority is the Control Authority, emerging program areas (including specific emerging contaminants), and technical issues. Technical issues might include municipal or industrial treatment technologies or emerging issues of concern (such as implementation of a new standard or effluent limitation guideline). These meetings should offer specific concrete information to stakeholders as well as opportunities for permitting authorities to share best practices with each other.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for the training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with permitting authorities, EPA, and other invited stakeholders to determine the training priorities and/or agendas for the training workshops. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to permitting authorities. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with and convening permitting authorities and federal agencies responsible for implementing the NPDES program, especially with regards to implementing the pretreatment and stormwater programs.

The training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants. Wherever possible, the workshops should be held at EPA Regional Offices or other no-cost government space. The successful applicant should provide the overall leadership for the training workshops, select workshop locations, secure workshop facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop workshop agendas and materials, and select the speakers. EPA will support the workshops by providing technical and programmatic assistance, meeting promotion, and review of meeting agendas and materials. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides and EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly this training workshop support activity is addressed.

Activity II: National NPDES and Nutrient Workshops

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement under this training workshop support activity for a total available funding of approximately \$635,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for the award will be five years and that the award will be incrementally funded on average at \$127,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for three biennial National NPDES Workshops and up to seven National Nutrient Workshops. Under this training workshop support activity, the proposal must address **the two elements** further described below.

Applicants with expertise in one of the elements may partner with another (other) eligible organization(s) to submit a proposal which addresses the two elements of this training workshop support activity. Please carefully review the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm for information regarding proposals that include partners as subawardees.

Proposals for awards under this training workshop support activity must address **both** of the following two elements (Element A., National NPDES Workshops **and** Element B., National Nutrient Workshops):

Element A: National NPDES Workshops

Under Element A., applicants should describe an approach to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for three National NPDES Workshops (eg., one workshop every other year over five years.)

The project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage the NPDES National Program Workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. However, the project components described do support the proposal review and selection criteria in Section V.A., and may provide guidance as applicants decide what activities will be needed to successfully support the training workshops. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The target audience for the National NPDES Workshops is expected to include primarily permitting authority program personnel and may also include local and regional officials, stakeholders, and national experts. An estimated 100-120 participants are expected to attend each training workshop; approximately 50% permitting authorities (representatives of up to 46 authorized programs), 5% non-permitting authority/non-federal, 20% EPA Regional offices and 25% EPA headquarters. EPA attendance is twofold: headquarters staff will be primarily serving as trainers, and Regional staff will attend so as to clarify any Regional policies of which states should be aware. Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The overall goals of the National NPDES Workshops are: (1) to engage with leaders in permitting authorities on program vision and managing complex policy issues; and (2) to offer

technical training and assistance to permitting authority on a wide variety of NPDES and related program areas.

Each training workshop should address one of the following goals, with Goal 1 sessions aimed towards program managers, and Goal 2 sessions geared towards senior technical staff. Both goals should be addressed in the course of the project period.

Goal 1 sessions should focus on issues of broad national concern, and may be general or topic specific. The types of issues that should be addressed in these meetings include, but are not limited to: permitting for nutrients, roles and responsibilities, program streamlining and use of technology, managing increasing complexity with decreasing funding, emerging program areas, and program expectations.

Goal 2 sessions should focus on issues that are technical in nature. They might be ongoing technical issues (such as whole effluent toxicity testing) or emerging issues of concern (such as implementation of a new standard or effluent limitation guideline). Examples of potential topics include, but are not limited to: whole effluent toxicity, construction stormwater, municipal stormwater, industrial stormwater, water quality trading, permit quality reviews, electronic notice of intent, compliance schedules, water quality standards implementation, effluent guidelines implementation, modelling methodology, total maximum daily load implementation, use of variances, and nutrients. These sessions should offer specific concrete information to stakeholders as well as opportunities for permitting authorities to share best practices with each other.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for the training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with permitting authorities, EPA, and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities and/or agendas for the training workshops. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to permitting authorities and other interested stakeholders. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with and convening permitting authorities and federal agencies responsible for implementing the NPDES program.

The training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants. Wherever possible, the workshops should be held at EPA Regional offices or other no-cost government space. The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the training workshops, select workshop locations, secure workshop facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop workshop agendas and materials, and select the speakers. EPA will support the workshops by providing technical and programmatic assistance, workshop promotion, and review of workshop agendas and materials. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides and EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides.

Element B: National Nutrient Workshops

Under Element B., applicants should describe an approach to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for up to seven National Nutrient Workshops (eg. one to two workshops each year over five years).

The project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage NPDES National Nutrient Workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. However, the project components described do support the proposal review and selection criteria in Section V.A., and may provide guidance as applicants decide what activities will be needed to successfully support the training workshops. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The target audience for the National Nutrient Workshops is expected to include primarily permitting authority personnel and may also include local and regional officials, stakeholders, and national experts. An estimated 50-60 participants are expected to attend each training workshop; approximately 60% permitting authorities, <1% non-state/non-federal, 30% EPA Regional Offices and 10% EPA Headquarters. Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The overall goal of the National Nutrients Workshops is to offer permitting authorities clear and constructive information on methods for establishing and implementing numeric nutrient limits in NPDES permits. It is anticipated that this will be accomplished through a combination of EPA-led instruction (estimated 2 days) and permitting authority sharing facilitated by the applicant (estimated 1 day). Permitting authority sessions should consider breadth related to types of nutrient implementation, stage in the nutrient implementation process, and geographic range.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for the training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the workshops. The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with permitting authorities, EPA, and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities and/or agendas for the training workshops. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to permitting authorities and other interested stakeholders. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with and convening permitting authorities, and federal agencies responsible for implementing the NPDES program.

The training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants. Wherever possible, the workshops should be held at EPA Regional Offices or other no-cost government space. The successful applicant should provide the overall leadership for the national meetings, select meeting locations, secure meeting

facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop meeting agendas and materials, and select the speakers. EPA will support the workshops by providing technical and programmatic assistance, instructors for the EPA-led portions of the meeting, meeting promotion, and review of meeting agendas and materials. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides and EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly both elements of this training workshop support activity are addressed.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN

All proposed projects must demonstrate the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan and 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 overall goals of the EPA Strategic Plan, available at <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/fy-2014-2018-strategic-plan>

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative, but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement for Activity I: National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops include, but are not limited to the following:

- Increased expertise and experience in reviewing and approving municipal pretreatment programs;
- Increased expertise and experience in oversight of municipal pretreatment programs, including use of tools to assess local program implementation (audits, inspections, annual reports) for environmental improvement;
- Increased management and oversight of, and methods to address, industries for which the EPA or permitting authority is the Control Authority;
- Program management and goal-based meetings addressing nationally significant topics;
- Technical training workshops on topics such as: local limits for contaminants of emerging concern, assessment determination of cases of interference and pass through, implementation of new effluent guidelines and pretreatment standards for particular industrial sectors;
- Increased expertise and experience in oversight of municipal, construction, and industrial programs; and
- Increased coordination and sharing of information to better address stormwater issues.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement for Activity II: National NPDES and Nutrient Workshops include, but are not limited to the following:

- Increased expertise and experience in establishing numeric nutrient effluent limitations;
- Program management and goal-based meetings addressing nationally significant topics; and
- Technical training workshops on topics such as: whole effluent toxicity, construction stormwater, municipal stormwater, industrial stormwater, water quality trading, permit quality reviews, electronic notice of intent, compliance schedules, water quality standards implementation, effluent guidelines implementation, modelling methodology, total maximum daily load implementation, use of variances, and nutrients.

Environmental outcomes, by comparison, are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes must be quantitative and need not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated environmental outcomes from the cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement for Activity I: National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops include, but are not limited to the following:

- Improved oversight of industries for which the EPA or permitting authority is the Control Authority;
- Improved stormwater permit quality;
- Enhanced communication between NPDES Permit Writers and Pretreatment Programs; and between NPDES Enforcement and Pretreatment Programs
- Improved consistency in application of effluent guidelines and pretreatment standards
- Improved communication and coordination among stormwater permitting authorities
- Increased permitting authority engagement on complex stormwater issues, resulting in better, more effective solutions.

Examples of anticipated environmental outcomes from the cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement for Activity II: National NPDES and Nutrient Workshops include, but are not limited to the following:

- Increased issuance of permits that include limits for nutrients, resulting in improved compliance and water quality.
- Improved communications between permitting authorities and EPA, resulting in better implementation of the program's goal of protecting water quality.
- Improved permit quality resulting in better water quality.
- Improved consistency between permitting authorities in permitting to protect water quality.
- Increased permitting authority engagement on complex environmental issues, resulting in better, more effective environmental solutions.

As part of the Proposal Narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. In addition, applicants will have to describe their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving

expected outputs and outcomes. Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of outputs and outcomes can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf.

D. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be funded under this announcement is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. CWA Section 104(b)(3) restricts the use of these assistance agreements to the following: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

The total amount of federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$890,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that two awards will be made under this announcement: one award for the National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops (Activity I); and one award for the National NPDES and Nutrient Workshops (Activity II). It is anticipated that the award for the National Stormwater and Pretreatment Workshops will be \$255,000, to be incrementally funded up to \$51,000 per year over a five year project period. It is anticipated that the award for National NPDES and Nutrient Workshops will be \$635,000, to be incrementally funded on average at \$127,000 per year (with some variation based on the meetings scheduled each year) over a five year project period.

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

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement. In addition, 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 selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

It is anticipated that cooperative agreements will be funded under this announcement. When a cooperative agreement is awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for a project selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
3. In accordance with the applicable regulations at 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements;
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); and
5. Review and comment on tasks/deliverables and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement(s). The final decision on the content of these reports rests with the recipient.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories, possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public or private non-profit institutions are eligible to apply. Individuals and for-profit entities are not eligible. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

An intertribal consortium is a partnership between two or more tribes that is authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance. (See 40 CFR 35.502.) The intertribal consortium is eligible only if the consortium demonstrates that all of its members meet the eligibility requirements and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance in accordance with 40 CFR 35.504 at the time of proposal submission. An intertribal consortium must submit with its proposal to EPA adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the consortium by its members to apply for and receive the grant. (See 40 CFR 35.504.) Non-profit applicants may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a non-profit organization in OMB Circular A-122.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

No cost-share/match is required under this announcement.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement.
2. Proposals must address one, and only one, of the training workshop support activities (Activity 1 or Activity II) listed in Section I.B, although eligible organizations may submit more than one proposal as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses only one training workshop support activity. Proposals that address more than one

- training workshop support activity will not be reviewed.
3. Proposals for Activity II must address both of the two elements of that training workshop support activity (Element A. National NPDES Workshops, and Element B. National Nutrient Workshops) as described in Section I.B.
 4. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.C.3 with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.C.3 establishes a 12-page, single-spaced Proposal Narrative page limit that does not include the cover page.
 5. In addition, initial proposals must be submitted through 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 proposal 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 proposal is timely submitted.
 6. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal/application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Amelia Letnes (letnes.amelia@epa.gov) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
 7. Proposals must be for projects that improve water quality by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.
 8. If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.
 9. Proposals must be consistent with the funding restrictions set forth in Section IV.E.
 10. Proposals must not propose budgets greater than \$255,000 for Activity I and \$635,000 for Activity II, as described in Section I. Proposals that propose budgets exceeding these limits will be deemed ineligible.

IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of

limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

Mailing Address:

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

Courier Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Barbara Perkins
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Rm # 51267
Washington, DC 20004

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Organization Name and DUNS
- Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
- Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through www.Grants.gov.

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

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2015, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December

31, 2015). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2015 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2016, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2016.

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

B. Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to <http://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, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://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 <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OW-OWM –15-01, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.436), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to

<http://www.grants.gov> and click “Browse Agencies” in the middle of the page and then go to “Environmental Protection Agency” to find the EPA funding opportunities.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than November 2, 2015. 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 application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the “Show Instructions” tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IV of the announcement
4. Other Attachments, if applicable

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 Amelia Letnes, at (202) 564-5627. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

c. Technical Issues With Submission

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

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear. ***Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.*** The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.

A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission.

Note: Grants.gov issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to www.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 Amelia Letnes with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Amelia Letnes at 202 564 5627. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to www.Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call www.Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Amelia Letnes at 202-564-5627.

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

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

C. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely and address all requirements thoroughly. All proposal packages must include the following documents described below:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun 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.

2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A)

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package.

3. Proposal Narrative.

The Proposal Narrative, items A-E below, must be limited to no more than twelve (12) single-spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper) (except for documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal. **Additional pages beyond the 12-page limit will not be considered.** The Proposal Narrative will be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 12 single-spaced page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials (such as annotated resumes) will not be considered within the page limit for the Proposal Narrative. Any documentation pertaining to Quality Assurance/Quality Control is also not included in the page limit for the Proposal Narrative.

The Proposal Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below in items A-E. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the Proposal Narrative.

A. Cover Page (Not included in the page limit) including:

- a. Name of Applicant;
- b. Training workshops support activity (Activity I and Activity II) from Section I.B addressed in the proposal (**applicants must address only one training workshop support activity per proposal package**);
- c. Project Title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less);
- d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
- e. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested and the total project cost); and
- f. Abstract (the abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the proposal. It should also include a

listing of the main tasks to be accomplished, and a description of the final product(s). The entire abstract should be 250 words or less).

B. Project Description containing:

- a. Technical Approach – Describe how the proposal addresses the training workshop support activity (Activity I or Activity II) described in Section I.B of this announcement. For Activity II, describe your approach for addressing the two elements of that training workshop support activity (Element A and Element B). Outline the steps you will take to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for the training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. Include a description of the approach for consulting with permitting authorities, EPA, and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities and/or agendas for the training workshops. If travel assistance is to be provided for non-federal attendees, describe the process for selecting non-federal attendees who may receive travel assistance.
- b. Environmental Results and Measuring Progress -
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan (see Section I.C of this announcement). EPA Strategic Plan: EPA Strategic Plan: Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. Information on the EPA Strategic Plan is available at <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/fy-2014-2018-strategic-plan>.
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project activities and an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement);
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of the project activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of project outputs. Describe an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement);
- c. Milestone Schedule – Provide a detailed projected timeline for the proposed project period. The timeline should cover each year of the project period and provide a breakout of the project activities in phases with associated tasks, a timeframe for completion of tasks, and an

approach for ensuring that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant.

- d. Transfer of Results – Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to permitting authorities and other interested stakeholders.
- e. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) (not included in page limit): If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A, QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC), of this announcement for additional information). Note: Development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required of all EPA assistance agreements that fund data collection and assessment and information analysis. The cost of the QAPP development should be included in the proposed budget.

C. Detailed Budget Narrative – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A such as “other” and “contractual”.

- a. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total cost. All sub-grant funding should be located in the “other” cost category. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for the EPA to determine their reasonableness and the allowability of costs for each project component/task. If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-federal attendees. Helpful tips on writing a budget may be found at

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/ogd_budget_detail_guidance.pdf.

D. Programmatic Capability/Specialized Experience

- a. Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of the applicant’s organizational experience related to the proposed project, and the organization’s infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
- b. Staff Expertise/Qualifications – Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Key staff include major project managers, support staff members, or other major project participants. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). List proposed partner entities, and describe their roles, and whether they will participate as subgrantees. Annotated resumes of applicant’s key staff are

encouraged but not required and are not included in the page limit for the Proposal Narrative. Annotated resumes should be limited to two pages.

- c. Specialized Experience –Include a description of your experience in working with and convening permitting authorities and federal agencies responsible for implementing the NPDES program.

E. Past Performance - Briefly describe federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last five years (no more than three such agreements and preferably EPA agreements) and:

- a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
- b. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
- c. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

Note: In evaluating the applicant’s past performance, the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (e.g., Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in the proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see also Section V).

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its Proposal Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposals submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be **received by 11:59 PM EST November 2, 2015**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR APPLICANTS INCORPORATED INTO THE SOLICITATION

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information and contracts and

subawards under grants, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package.

1) Technical Approach (30 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the applicant proposes a technical approach to planning, preparing, and providing technical support for the training workshop support activity (Activity I or Activity II) identified in Section I.B of the announcement. (30 points)
2) Milestone Schedule/ Detailed Budget/Transfer of Results (15 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal addressed each of the following sub-criteria: a) A detailed milestone schedule for the proposed project period. Clearly articulated milestone schedule for project tasks, should include timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks and an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (5 points) b) Reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. (5 points) c) A description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to permitting authorities and other interested stakeholders. (5 points)
3) Environmental Results (20 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on each of the following sub-criterion: a) Environmental Results: The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates potential environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. (10 points)

	b) Measuring Progress: The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes are provided in Section I.C of the announcement). (10 points)
4) Programmatic Capability/ Specialized Experience (15 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion: a) Organizational experience related to the proposed project and infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points) b) Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points) c) Specialized experience in working with and convening permitting authorities and federal agencies responsible for implementing the NPDES program. (5 points)
5) Past Performance (20 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors: a) Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last five years (no more than three, and preferably EPA agreements). (10 points) b) History of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last five years (no more than three, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (5 points) c) Extent and quality to which the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed within the last five years (no more than three, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the

	applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (5 points) Note: In evaluating applicants under items a), b), and c) above, the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (e.g., Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). Applicants who have no relevant or available past performance information will receive a neutral score for these factors (i.e., 5 points for subcriterion a), 2.5 points for subcriterion b), and 2.5 points for subcriterion c)). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factors (i.e., zero points for subcriterion a), zero points for subcriterion b), and zero points for subcriterion c).
--	---

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel(s) comprised of EPA will review the eligible proposals for each training workshop support activity (Activity I and Activity II) based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. Two separate ranking lists, one per training workshop support activity, will be developed based on the panel evaluation. The ranking list for each training workshop support activity will be provided to the Selection Official who makes the final funding decisions for each training workshop support activity. In making the final funding decisions for each training workshop support activity, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account program priorities.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by April 15, 2016. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal or the project contact listed in the proposal. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the Grants and Interagency Agreement Management Division. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The

award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

This award is subject to the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Title 2 CFR, Parts 200 and 1500. 2 CFR 1500.1, Adoption of 2 CFR 200, states that the Environmental Protection Agency adopts the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards to Non-Federal Entities (subparts A through F of 2 CFR 200), as supplemented by this part, as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policies and procedures for financial assistance administration. This part satisfies the requirements of 2 CFR 200.110(a) and gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance as supplemented by this part. EPA also has programmatic regulations located in 40 CFR Chapter 1 Subchapter B.

C. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

D. DISPUTE PROCEDURES

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 <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement.

E. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the workplan consistent with 2 CFR 200.328 and 40 CFR Part 45. Additionally, if travel assistance is provided to selected attendees, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops.

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, and administrative capability, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Note to Applicants: In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. In addition, if necessary, the EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **October 21, 2015** and written responses will be posted on EPA's website at <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/npdes/NPDES-Training-Courses-and-Workshops.cfm>

Agency Contact

Amelia Letnes

E-mail: letnes.amelia@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements may be applicable to these grants (see 2 CFR 1500.11). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Grant Coordinator (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff person.

If water quality data is generated, either directly or by subaward, the successful applicant must ensure all water quality data is transmitted into the Agency's Storage and Retrieval (STORET) Data Warehouse annually or by project completion using either WQX or WQXweb in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan. Water quality data that are appropriate for STORET include physical, chemical, and biological sample results for water, sediment and fish tissue. The data include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is the water data schema associated with the EPA, State and Tribal Exchange Network. Using the WQX schema partners map their database structure to the WQX/STORET structure. WQXweb is a web-based tool to convert data into the STORET format for smaller data generators that are not direct partners on the Exchange Network. More information about WQX, WQXweb, and the STORET Warehouse, including tutorials, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/storet/wqx/>.

B. Data Access and Information Release: EPA has the right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data first produced under the awards to be made under this solicitation and authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for Federal purposes under 2 CFR 200.315. In addition, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.315(e), if EPA receives a Freedom of Information Act request for research data that (1) relates to published research findings produced under an EPA award and (2) was used by the Federal Government in developing an agency action that has the force and effect of law, then EPA shall request, and the award recipient shall provide, within a reasonable time, the research data so that it may be made available to the public through procedures established under the FOIA.