Federal Agency Name:	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Water, Office of Wastewater Management
Funding Opportunity Title:	Training and Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works for the Prevention, Reduction, and Elimination of Pollution
Announcement Type:	Request for Applications (RFA)
Funding Opportunity Number (FON):	EPA-OW-OWM-20-02
Assistance Listing:	66.446

Dates: The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **May 17, 2021, by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET) in order to be considered for funding.** Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (Grants.gov) no later than **May 17, 2021**, **in order to be considered for funding.** Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency contacts identified in Section VII by **April 27, 2021.** Written responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs) will be posted on EPA's website at: www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/technical-assistance-treatment-works. EPA strongly recommends interested applicants refer to the FAQs webpage prior to submitting a question.

Note to Applicants: Following EPA's evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. If you name subawardee/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) including individual consultants in your application as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at EPA's Solicitation Clauses (http://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses).

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 (http://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses).

Summary: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting applications from eligible applicants as described in Section III.A to provide training and technical assistance for rural, small, and tribal publicly owned wastewater treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems for the prevention, reduction and elimination of pollution. Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 104(b)(8) requires that the funds are used for training and technical assistance to support the following three components:

- Component 1: Acquisition of Financing
- Component 2: Protect Water Quality and Achieve Clean Water Act Compliance
- Component 3: Disseminate Planning, Design, Construction, and Operation Information

Training and technical assistance activities provided should be made available nationally in rural, small, and tribal communities.

Eligible applicants under this announcement are public and private nonprofit organizations, subject to CWA 104(w), that are qualified and experienced in providing on-site training and technical assistance to small publicly owned treatment works and onsite/decentralized wastewater treatment systems. For-profit organizations, states, municipalities, and tribal governments are not eligible to apply.

The total estimated amount of federal funding potentially available under this announcement is $12,000,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that a total of one to four cooperative agreements, each with a project period of up to 18 months, will be awarded under this announcement.

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Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objectives

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants for projects discussed in further detail below. EPA anticipates awarding one to four cooperative agreements under this announcement.

Funding is expected to be available to provide training and technical assistance for rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems and should be made available nationally in rural and small communities and to all personnel of these systems, including personnel of tribally owned and operated systems. Eligible activities include training and technical assistance only. Infrastructure construction projects such as repairing water or sewer lines, adding new equipment, or upgrading, retrofitting or rehabilitating existing equipment are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, (available at: https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan). Awards made under this announcement will support progress toward Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment: Deliver a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment for all Americans and future generations by carrying out

the Agency's core mission, Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water: Ensure waters are clean through improved water infrastructure and, in partnership with states and tribes, sustainably manage programs to support drinking water, aquatic ecosystems, and recreational, economic, and subsistence activities, of EPA's Strategic Plan.

The statutory authority for the award(s) expected to be made under this announcement is Section 104(b)(8) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) as codified by 33 U.S. Code § 1254 - Research, investigations, training, and information:

> "(1) to provide technical assistance to rural, small, and tribal municipalities for the purpose of assisting, in consultation with the State in which the assistance is provided, such municipalities and tribal governments in the planning, developing, and acquisition of financing for eligible projects and activities described in [33 U.S.C. Section 1383(c)];
> (2) to provide technical assistance and training for rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems to enable such treatment works and systems to protect water quality and achieve and maintain compliance with the requirements of [the Clean Water Act]; and
> (3) to disseminate information to rural, small, and tribal municipalities and municipalities that meet the affordability criteria established under [33 U.S.C. Section 1383(i)(2)] by the State in which the municipality is located with respect to planning, design, construction, and operation of publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems."

B. National Priority

Each application submitted under this announcement must address the National Priority described below. Under this competition, only one application can be submitted per applicant. If an applicant submits more than one application, EPA will contact them before the review process begins to determine which application(s) will be withdrawn. If the applicant is not able to communicate a decision within two business days of being contacted by EPA, EPA will accept the application which was submitted first through Grants.gov. Additional information regarding the one application per applicant requirement may be found in the FAQ document available at www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/technical-assistance-treatment-works.

National priority area title: **Training and Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works for the Prevention, Reduction, and Elimination of Pollution**

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants that address the following three components:

- Component 1: Acquisition of Financing
- Component 2: Protect Water Quality and Achieve Clean Water Act Compliance
- Component 3: Disseminate Planning, Design, Construction, and Operation Information

Applications **must address all three components** which are further discussed below. For purposes of this announcement, rural and small wastewater treatment systems are systems that treat up to 1 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater or serve a population of less than 10,000 persons and may also serve operations such as, but not limited to hospitals, schools, and restaurants. Most wastewater systems in the nation serve populations less than 10,000. Tribal systems serve populations of federally recognized tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and tribes on former reservations in Oklahoma (as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs). For the purposes of this announcement, "small publicly owned treatment works" are defined as wastewater systems or treatment facilities that are owned by a public entity (such as a municipality) or not-for-profit entity (such as regional sewer districts), and/or serve tribal communities (with the exception of systems that are owned by U.S. federal entities). "Decentralized systems" are defined as: septic or onsite or clustered systems used to collect, treat, and disperse or reclaim wastewater from a small community, tribe, or service area that are publicly or privately-owned and/or serve tribal communities (with the exception of systems that are owned by U.S. federal entities). For further details regarding decentralized systems refer to the EPA "Overview of Clean Water State Revolving Fund Eligibilities" decentralized chapter at: https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/overview-clean-water-state-revolving-fund-eligibilities.

Applicants should describe their proposed approach for providing training and technical assistance and disseminating information to rural, small, and tribal treatment works and to communities served by onsite/decentralized wastewater treatment systems. Training and technical assistance may be provided through face-to-face trainings and site visits or through remote learning approaches. This assistance may also include circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance programs and training. Example activities are described in the further detailed component descriptions below.

Applicants should describe their proposed approach to making training and technical assistance available nationally in all 50 states and the U.S. territories as described under Section I.C, Providing Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis, including how they will reach out to tribally-owned and operated systems, and how they will provide training and technical assistance to these systems. EPA encourages applications that include non-traditional or innovative approaches in addition to conventional or traditional approaches for training and technical assistance. The applicant should demonstrate how these non-traditional or innovative approaches in conjunction with conventional or traditional approaches show the potential to more effectively reach the intended audience than only conventional or traditional means.

The goals of the training and technical assistance activities are to assist rural, small, and tribal treatment works and onsite/decentralized wastewater treatment systems to improve operational performance and sustainable operations over the long-term, thereby improving public health and water quality. Applicants should describe how they will document and report on progress toward meeting this goal as described in Section I.D, EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results. Applicants should also describe a process whereby they will consult with the appropriate regulatory authority (such as the state or territorial primacy agency or EPA regional direct implementation coordinator) in each state, tribe or territory in which the assistance is to be expended or otherwise made available prior to providing training and technical assistance in that

state, tribe or territory. In particular, applicants should indicate how they will work with the state, territory or EPA to identify the systems in greatest need of assistance; how they will keep those agencies, the EPA Project Officer and appropriate EPA regional coordinators informed regarding the assistance provided; and how they will document these results.

All eligible applications will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly all three components are addressed (see Section V). EPA anticipates awarding approximately one to four cooperative agreements, subject to availability, ranging from approximately $1,000,000 to no more than $12,000,000. It is anticipated that the total amount of all awards under this competitive announcement will be approximately $12,000,000 in federal funding, with project periods of up to 18 months, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s).

Applicants must address all three components in their application package. Applicants with expertise in one of the components described below may partner with another (other) eligible organization(s) to submit an application which addresses the three components. Please carefully review Section IV.E for information regarding applications that include partners as subawardees. The three components are as follows:

Component 1: Acquisition of Financing

As per the statute the funding is available "… to provide technical assistance to rural, small, and tribal municipalities for the purpose of assisting … such municipalities and tribal governments in the planning, developing, and acquisition of financing for eligible projects and activities." Applicants must describe the proposed approach to provide technical assistance to rural, small, and tribal municipalities in the planning, developing, and acquisition of financing for Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) eligible projects and activities. The goal of Component 1 is to build the financial and managerial capacity of rural, small, and tribal wastewater systems to provide safe wastewater treatment over the long-term. The ability for wastewater systems to attain and maintain financial and managerial capacity is critical to ensuring that they can reliably and sustainably treat their customers' wastewater.

Applicants should describe their proposed approach for providing technical assistance for personnel who operate or manage rural, small, and tribal wastewater systems, including decision makers such as trustees, board members, or system owners, to help them build their financial and managerial capacity to address current needs and to achieve long-term sustainability. Technical assistance may be provided through face-to-face activities and site visits or through remote learning approaches.

This assistance may also include circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance programs. Financial capacity refers to the financial resources of the wastewater system, including but not limited to, sustainable management practices, asset management, revenue sufficiency, user rate-setting, rate collection, non-payment shut-off policies, credit worthiness, fiscal controls, operational budgeting and planning. Managerial capacity refers to the management structure and practices of the wastewater system, including but not limited to, ownership accountability, staffing and organization, workforce recruitment and retention,

planning for natural disaster related impacts, and effective linkages and communication with customers and regulatory agencies.

One of the primary sources of financial assistance for small wastewater systems is EPA's CWSRF program. CWSRF is a federal-state partnership that provides communities low-cost financing for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects. Routine and regular communication with the state CWSRF through these technical assistance activities is expected. Applicants should describe the process for consulting with the appropriate regulatory authority in each state, tribe or territory prior to initiating training and technical assistance activities. Applicants should also describe a process for reporting back to those authorities, to the EPA Project Officer and to the appropriate EPA regional coordinators regarding the assistance provided and document results. EPA maintains a public contact list of each of the State CWSRF contacts at:
https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/list-state-contacts-clean-water-state-revolving-fund-cwsrf.

Examples of eligible technical assistance activities for planning, developing, and acquisition of financing for CWSRF eligible projects and activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide technical assistance to improve the knowledge and skill competency of publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system personnel in the areas of managerial and financial capacity.
- Provide instruction sessions for publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system managers and board members in asset management, fiscal planning, communicating effectively with system customers, and other sustainable management topics.
- Provide technical assistance in asset management program implementation.
- Provide technical assistance to develop financial assessments and rate analyses.
- Provide technical assistance on workforce development.
- Work with publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems to conduct analyses on the potential benefits of partnerships and collaboration with other systems, including shared operators and treatment, restructuring and consolidation, thereby enabling them to become financially sustainable and to ensure wastewater is safely and affordably treated.
- Assist publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems to access and manage multiple infrastructure funding sources to address public health risks and achieve compliance.

EPA also encourages applicants to propose additional types of activities that may achieve the objectives of this RFA.

Component 2: Protect Water Quality and Achieve Clean Water Act Compliance

Applicants must describe the proposed approach to provide training and technical assistance for rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, and communities served by decentralized wastewater systems, to achieve and maintain compliance with the CWA. Rural, small, and tribal wastewater systems often face common challenges including: (1) a lack of capacity to assess current operations and identify short- and long-term opportunities for improvement; (2) frequent turnover of operations personnel; (3) personnel who lack necessary technical, financial or managerial skills; (4) limited rate bases; (5) aging infrastructure; (6) lack of knowledge of increasingly stringent discharge limits; and (7) lack of knowledge of newer techniques to reduce discharges, assess and improve operations, and analyze infrastructure alternatives to meet wastewater quality goals.

Training and technical assistance may be provided through face-to-face trainings and site visits or through remote learning approaches. This assistance may also include circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance programs and training. Assistance may include: training on long-term sustainability and effectiveness of rural, small, and tribal wastewater systems and decentralized systems, evaluation of treatment and/or infrastructure alternatives, training on preliminary engineering evaluations, assessments of management approaches and their effectiveness, development of appropriate rate structures, education of local officials, identification of funding alternatives, and/or use of green infrastructure, among other activities.

Applicants should describe their approach for utilizing existing information and materials on pollution prevention, facility operation and maintenance, effective utility management, and wastewater treatment alternatives with the communities and facilities being assisted. Applicants should describe an approach for providing on-site training and technical assistance, while also providing products and assistance for a broader (e.g., nationwide) audience. These trainings or technical activities may use existing materials, including, but not limited to documents and tools developed by EPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Indian Health Service (IHS) and other federal agencies. Such trainings or technical solutions could then be developed into or incorporated into existing guidebooks or webinars or other on-line training for transfer to rural, small, and tribal wastewater systems nationwide or supported as a "train-the-trainer" approach to increase material reach.

These training and technical assistance activities are to assist rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems in achieving and maintaining CWA compliance. Applicants should describe how they will document and report progress toward attaining compliance, as described in Section I.D., EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results. Applicants should also describe a process whereby they will consult with the appropriate regulatory authority (such as the state, tribal or territorial primacy agency or EPA regional direct implementation coordinators) in each state, tribe or territory in which the assistance is to be expended or otherwise made available, prior to providing training and technical assistance in that state, tribe or territory. In particular, applicants should indicate how they will work with the state, tribe, territory or EPA to identify the publicly owned

treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems in greatest need of assistance and identify the training topics of greatest need to these small wastewater treatment systems; how they will keep those agencies, the EPA Project Officer and appropriate EPA regional coordinators informed regarding the assistance provided; and how they will document these results.

Routine and regular communication with the state CWSRF through these training and technical assistance activities is expected. EPA maintains a public contact list for the CWSRF at: https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/list-state-contacts-clean-water-state-revolving-fund-cwsrf. EPA issues all National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) water quality permits in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Mexico, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, and on federal and tribal lands. Other states have been delegated by EPA to issue their own permits. Applicants should routinely and regularly communicate with their local state and/or EPA regional NPDES program; further details may be found at: https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits.

Decentralized wastewater treatment systems such as septic systems, are used to treat and dispose of small volumes of wastewater onsite, usually from houses and businesses located in suburban and rural locations not served by a centralized public sewer system. Septic systems treat wastewater from household plumbing fixtures (e.g., toilet, shower, laundry, etc.) through both natural and technological processes. Decentralized wastewater treatment systems may face significant maintenance and management challenges that affect their ability to maintain compliance with the CWA, including: (1) lack of information on system location, performance, age, and maintenance history; (2) improper design or siting; (3) lack of owner knowledge of proper preventative maintenance techniques; (4) lack of life-cycle management; and (5) lack of owner/service provider knowledge of advanced treatment and dispersal technologies.

Applicants should describe their approach to providing training and technical assistance on aspects of decentralized wastewater treatment system planning, installation, operation and maintenance. Applicants should describe their approach for utilizing and sharing existing information and materials on appropriate treatment and dispersal options to the appropriate identified audience(s). Routine and regular communication with the EPA regional and state decentralized wastewater treatment system contacts is recommended. For a list of decentralized wastewater treatment system EPA regional contacts and State contacts see: https://www.epa.gov/septic/forms/contact-us-about-septic-systems.

Training and technical assistance activities under this component should also focus on promoting the sustainable and effective management of publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems and improving system performance. Applicants should describe their approach for training, for example, assisting facility managers, utility boards, and wastewater operators in sustainable utility operations. For additional details and examples, see the "Rural and Small Systems Guidebook to Sustainable Water and Wastewater Utility Management "at: https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/rural-and-small-systems-guidebook-sustainable-water-and-wastewater.

More than one in five households in the United States depend on individual onsite or small

community cluster systems (decentralized wastewater treatment systems) to treat their wastewater. Homeowners face many challenges in providing wastewater treatment and commonly face challenges in obtaining the assistance they need to keep their systems in good working order. These challenges may include not knowing where to access accurate and timely information and technical assistance on decentralized wastewater treatment system ownership, in addition to not knowing where to access accurate decentralized wastewater treatment system construction, operation, maintenance, or testing information, local and state health regulations, local water quality and quantity concerns, and emergency contacts and procedures.

Examples of eligible training and technical assistance activities for rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems to support compliance and protect water quality may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide operator training and technical assistance on CWA compliance, with emphasis on NPDES permitting.
- Provide training to decision makers and board members on CWA requirements and their responsibilities.
- Provide training to operators, staff, and managers on the sustainable and effective management of small publicly owned treatment works.
- Provide training and technical assistance to publicly owned treatment works facing earthquake impacts, drought, flooding, and other weather-related challenges.
- Conduct preliminary engineering evaluations to assess wastewater treatment, storage and conveyance system issues, and identify low-cost alternative technology and management techniques.
- Provide training for operator certification and continuing education units (CEUs). Applicants should describe how they will obtain state approval for CEU credits for their training courses.
- Perform on-site trainings or technical assistance that focus on improving performance at local facilities (e.g., training on nutrient removal technologies, rate structures, energy efficiency opportunities, and assessments of sustainability and proper management of small publicly owned treatment works).
- Perform on-site trainings or technical assistance that focus on water reuse that reclaims and treats water and reuses it for purposes such as, but not limited to agriculture and irrigation, potable water supplies, groundwater replenishment, industrial processes, and environmental restoration.
- Consideration of alternatives for wastewater treatment and dispersal options, including advanced treatment, alternative drainfields, nutrient control and green infrastructure practices.
- Development of maintenance schedules.
- Assistance forming responsible management entities (RMEs) and supporting the development of a long-term business plan.
- Training of community leaders, service providers, and regulatory officials to assist in consideration of infrastructure construction alternatives, to highlight the importance of management, and to facilitate certification of installers and operators.
- Outreach to individual decentralized wastewater treatment system owners and the

general public on proper preventative and corrective maintenance techniques.
- Developing and/or providing information, training, and technical assistance to organizations that work with decentralized wastewater treatment system owners (e.g. county public health offices).
- Developing and/or providing electronic newsletters or using social media to provide topical or emergency information quickly to decentralized wastewater treatment system owners. Educating septic system owners through face-to-face visits regarding potential or actual threats to their systems and whom to contact for assistance.

EPA also encourages applicants to propose additional types of activities that may achieve the objectives of this RFA.

Component 3: Disseminate Planning, Design, Construction, and Operation Information

Applicants must describe the proposed approach to disseminate planning, design, construction, and operation information to: (1) rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works; (2) decentralized wastewater treatment systems; and (3) municipalities that meet the CWSRF affordability criteria established under Section 603(i) of the CWA as amended by the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA).

Municipalities that meet the affordability criteria under Section 603(i) of the CWA as amended by the 2014 WRRDA are those communities that might have difficulty financing projects without additional subsidization. The affordability criteria are based on:
- income;
- unemployment data;
- population trends; and
- other data determined relevant by the state CWSRF program.

Applicants should describe a proposed approach to coordinate with state CWSRF contacts to determine which communities meet the affordability criteria. EPA maintains a public contact list for the CWSRF program at: https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/list-state-contacts-clean-water-state-revolving-fund-cwsrf.

Many rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works, and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, face challenges in reliably providing safe treatment to their customers and consistently meeting the requirements of the CWA. The challenges that publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems face may include, but are not limited to: (1) lack of adequate revenue or access to financing; (2) aging infrastructure; (3) retirement of experienced system operators and the inability to recruit new operators; (4) managers and operators who lack the requisite financial, technical or managerial skills; (5) lack of planning for infrastructure upgrades or the ability to respond to and recover from natural disasters (e.g., floods or tornadoes); and (6) lack of understanding of existing or new regulatory requirements and treatment technologies. As a result, some rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems may experience

frequent or long-term planning, design, construction and operation challenges in reliably providing safe wastewater treatment to their customers.

Applicants should describe their proposed approach to disseminate information for the planning, design, construction and operation of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems. Applicants should also include an approach to disseminate information to personnel who operate or manage small publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, including decision makers such as trustees, board members or system owners, to strengthen their technical capacity and enable them to comply with the regulatory requirements applicable to their system and become more resilient to natural disasters.

Information about training and technical assistance may be provided through face-to-face trainings and site visits or through remote learning approaches. This information dissemination assistance may also include circuit-rider and multi-state regional training and technical assistance programs. The information dissemination topics should refer to the physical infrastructure of the publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, including, but not limited to, the adequacy of the system's infrastructure (i.e. collection, storage, treatment, and by product conveyance), and the ability of system personnel to adequately operate and maintain the system.

As previously described, more than one in five households in the United States depend on individual onsite or small community cluster systems (decentralized wastewater treatment systems) to treat their wastewater. Homeowners face many challenges in wastewater treatment, and commonly face challenges in obtaining the assistance they need to keep their systems in good working order. These challenges may include not knowing where to access accurate and timely information and technical assistance on decentralized wastewater treatment system construction, operation, maintenance, or testing information, local and state health regulations, local water quality and quantity concerns, and emergency contacts and procedures. Applicants should describe their proposed approach to disseminate information on planning, design, construction, and operation of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems.

Examples of eligible activities that disseminate planning, design, construction and operation information activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Developing and/or providing online and hard copy information and materials on wastewater treatment topics.
- Developing, sharing, and delivering online webinars, conference calls, video conferencing, hotlines, online courses, and other forms of distance learning.
- Developing and/or providing electronic newsletters or using social media to provide topical or emergency information quickly to small publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system owners.
- Developing and/or providing online and hard copy information and materials on topics of interest to homeowners, such as decentralized wastewater treatment system construction, maintenance and operation, testing, water quality and protection and

state/tribal/local regulations.

- Providing information, training and technical assistance to other organizations with activities that affect decentralized wastewater treatment system owners.
- Developing and/or providing electronic newsletters or using social media to provide topical or emergency information quickly to decentralized wastewater treatment system owners.
- Educating decentralized wastewater treatment system owners through face-to-face visits regarding potential or actual threats to their systems and whom to contact for assistance.

EPA also encourages applicants to propose other types of activities that may achieve the objectives of this RFA.

C. Providing Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis

Applications for projects described above should demonstrate the applicant's ability and approach to making training and technical assistance available on a national basis. Applicants should describe their proposed approach to making training and technical assistance available nationally in all 50 states and the U.S. territories (i.e., Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa) including how they will reach out to tribally-owned and operated treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, through a combination of face-to-face/on-site and remote training and technical assistance approaches. The training and technical assistance may include circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance, or some other program design that makes training and technical assistance available nationally. Applicants should describe how they will reach out to tribally owned and operated treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems and how they will provide training and technical assistance to these systems. Applicants should include in their description how they propose to deliver trainings in person under normal circumstances and how they will deliver the trainings if in-person training is not possible due to impacts related to COVID-19 (e.g., under quarantine situations, if social distancing is required in your locale). Alternative trainings due to the impacts of COVID-19 may include switching from in-person formats to online only or reducing the number of participants in each training to allow participants to be located six feet apart from each other. Please note the "Providing Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis" evaluation criteria in Section V: Application Review Information.

Applications will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V, including the demonstrated ability and described approach to making training and technical assistance available nationally in the maximum number of states, tribes and U.S. territories through face-to-face/on-site and/or remotely. EPA will give priority consideration to applications that describe a thorough, quality, and flexible approach that tailors the training and technical assistance techniques and resources to address the specific needs of the target audience in as many states, tribes and U.S. territories as possible. A tailored approach should describe how the applicant will use the most appropriate techniques and materials to address the needs of various audiences, such as publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system managers versus operators or

private home owners, as well as the unique needs of populations determined by geographical, socio-economic, system-type, educational or other factors. The applicant should take into consideration how state and local regulations and policies impact the implementation of national standards. The approach should also demonstrate how the applicant would balance the use of face-to-face/on-site techniques which often result in a high level of understanding and knowledge retention for participants, but can be more expensive and resource-intensive, with the need to provide assistance in a maximum number of states, tribes and U.S. territories through remote techniques. Training and technical assistance may take the following forms.

1. Face-to-face and on-site technical assistance, which may include, for example, classroom training, workshops, site visits and circuit-riders or other multi-state and/or regional approaches to provide on-site technical assistance.
2. Remote technical assistance which may include, for example, webcasts, video conferencing, hotlines, online courses, and other forms of distance learning.

Training and technical assistance may also include developing and disseminating (through web posting and other means) various resources such as training and educational materials or tools that can be used nationally and/or with state or territorial-specific variations, as appropriate. Applicants should indicate in their applications an estimate as to what portion of their training and technical assistance would be on-site face-to-face and what portion would be remote training and technical assistance.

All applications should also include a discussion of how the applicant will transfer results, effective compliance strategies and resources developed (such as tools, videos and training materials) to interested stakeholders such as other small publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, states, territories, tribes, local governments and private home owners through the development and dissemination of training and educational materials, websites or other means.

D. EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results

Applicants must demonstrate in their application how their project and proposed activities link to the Strategic Plan Goal and Objective identified below. This announcement is consistent with EPA's priority to assist small publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems with technical assistance and training to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and long-term system sustainability.

The training and technical assistance activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, (available at: https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan). Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment: Deliver a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment for all Americans and future generations by carrying out the Agency's core mission, Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water: Ensure waters are clean through improved water infrastructure and, in partnership with states and tribes, sustainably manage programs to support drinking water, aquatic ecosystems, and recreational, economic, and subsistence

activities, of the EPA Strategic Plan.

EPA also requires that applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements.

All proposed projects must address the 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 protection of human health and the environment by preventing water pollution. The outputs and outcomes should directly address the goals of providing training and technical assistance to support:

- Component 1: Acquisition of Financing
- Component 2: Protect Water Quality and Achieve Clean Water Act Compliance
- Component 3: Disseminate Planning, Design, Construction, and Operation Information

Outputs

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 outputs for *Component 1: Acquisition of Financing*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increased number of rural, small and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system personnel with improved knowledge and skill competency in managerial and financial capacity.
- An increased number of rural, small and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system managers with asset management, fiscal planning, and effective customer communication knowledge.
- An increased number of asset management plans, financial assessments and workforce development plans for rural, small and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems.
- An increased number of rural, small and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems developing plans to implement water system partnerships, such as shared wastewater treatment and operators, restructuring, consolidation, or other collaboration or partnership actions with other systems.
- An increased number of rural, small and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems managing multiple infrastructure funding sources.

Examples of anticipated outputs for *Component 2: Protect Water Quality and Achieve Clean Water Act Compliance*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increased number of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems conducting diagnostic and troubleshooting analyses to determine factors affecting performance and compliance with NPDES permits.
- An increased number of board members and other small publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system decision makers receiving training on asset management and other sustainable management and financial concepts.
- An increased number of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works operators receiving training utilizing hands-on and other training approaches which maximize understanding and knowledge retention.
- An increased number of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works receiving or performing energy audits and taking actions to improve energy efficiency based on audit results.

Examples of anticipated outputs for *Component 3: Disseminate Planning, Design, Construction, and Operation Information*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increased number of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system managers and operators receiving training and technical assistance in:
    - regulatory requirements,
    - financial and managerial capacity concepts and practices,
    - basic wastewater system operations,
    - effective utility management, and
    - advanced treatment issues.
- An increased number of community leaders, publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems operators, and decentralized wastewater treatment system Responsible Management Entities (RMEs) receiving training or technical assistance on analyzing treatment alternatives, management requirements, or homeowner education.
- An increased number of decentralized wastewater treatment systems that have been inventoried, inspected, or have maintenance schedules or manuals for new or upgraded systems.
- An increased number of private homeowners receiving training and technical assistance on decentralized wastewater treatment system issues.

Outcomes

Environmental outcomes 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 may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. Outcomes must be quantitative and may 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 outcomes for *Component 1: Acquisition of Financing*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increase in the knowledge and capacity of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system operators in the areas of financial and managerial capacity.
- Increased number of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems that have adopted asset management programs as part of their standard operating and management practices.
- An increased number of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems participating in water system partnerships, such as shared wastewater treatment and operators, restructuring, consolidation, or other collaboration or partnership actions with other systems.

Examples of anticipated outcomes for *Component 2: Protect Water Quality and Achieve Clean Water Act Compliance*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increased number of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned wastewater treatment systems in compliance with NPDES regulations or making substantial progress toward compliance as indicated by measured performance, reduced enforcement priority status or other factors.
- Fewer public health-related or public nuisance-related complaints associated with malfunctioning decentralized wastewater treatment systems.
- A measurable improvement in the performance of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned wastewater treatment systems where operational changes or other recommendations were implemented following a system diagnostic evaluation.
- An increased number of rural, small and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems that have improved their energy efficiency and/or achieved cost savings due to taking efficiency actions after conducting energy audits.

Examples of anticipated outcomes for *Component 3: Disseminate Planning, Design, Construction, and Operation Information*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increase in the knowledge and competency of rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system operators.
- An increased number of decentralized wastewater treatment systems that are managed under Responsible Management Entities (RMEs).
- An increase in both publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment system owners/operators and homeowners engaging in active management of decentralized wastewater treatment systems.
- An increase in the knowledge of private homeowners in topics such as proper decentralized wastewater treatment system construction, operation and maintenance, testing, relevant state regulations or state programs.

As part of the Project Narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan and to the goal of enabling small publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems to achieve and maintain compliance with the CWA. 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 discussion of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/linking-assistance-agreements-environmental-results (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements).

E. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for the funds anticipated to be distributed under this announcement is Section 104(b)(8) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) as codified by 33 U.S. Code § 1254 - Research, investigations, training, and information which authorizes EPA:

> "(1) to provide technical assistance to rural, small, and tribal municipalities for the purpose of assisting, in consultation with the State in which the assistance is provided, such municipalities and tribal governments in the planning, developing, and acquisition of financing for eligible projects and activities described in [33 U.S.C. Section 1383(c)];
> (2) to provide technical assistance and training for rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems to enable such treatment works and systems to protect water quality and achieve and maintain compliance with the requirements of [the Clean Water Act]; and
> (3) to disseminate information to rural, small, and tribal municipalities and municipalities that meet the affordability criteria established under [33 U.S.C. Section 1383(i)(2)] by the State in which the municipality is located with respect to planning, design, construction, and operation of publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems."

Section II. Award Information

A. Amount of Funding

The total amount of federal funding potentially available under this announcement is approximately $12,000,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that approximately one to four cooperative agreements will be awarded as described in Section I.B of this announcement. Cooperative agreements funded under this announcement will have up to 18-month project periods.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the

application or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement or to make fewer awards than anticipated. While EPA expects to make one to four awards, EPA reserves the right not to do so. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. Type of Funding

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

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant.
2. Collaboration during performance of the scope of work, including participation in training and technical assistance activities such as attending specific trainings and workshops.
3. In accordance with the applicable regulations at 2 CFR 200 Subpart D (200.317 through 200.326) as appropriate, review of proposed procurements.
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient).
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).

Section III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants under this competition are public and private nonprofit organizations, subject to CWA 104(w), that are qualified and experienced in providing on-site training and technical assistance to small publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems. Nonprofit organization, as defined by 2 CFR Part 200, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve and/or expand its operations. Note that 2 CFR Part 200 specifically excludes the following types of organizations from the definition of nonprofit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation: (i) institutions of higher education; and (ii) state, local and federally recognized

Indian tribal governments. Institutions of Higher Education are defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001. Nonetheless, institutions of higher education who otherwise qualify as nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply as indicated in the Office of Management and Budget's July 2017 Frequent Questions on the Uniform Grant Guidance. For-profit organizations, states, municipalities, tribal governments, and individuals are not eligible to apply. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. EPA may ask applicants to demonstrate that they are eligible for funding under this announcement.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

A non-federal cost-share or match is not required.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

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

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement at the time of application submission.

2. Under this competition, **only one application can be submitted per applicant**. If an applicant submits more than one application, EPA will contact them before the review process begins to determine which application(s) will be withdrawn. If the applicant is not able to communicate a decision within 48 hours of being contacted by EPA, EPA will accept the application received by Grants.gov first. Additional information regarding the one application per applicant requirement may be found in the FAQ document available at www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/technical-assistance-treatment-works.

3. Applications must address all three components identified in Section I.B. Applications that do not address the three components will be rejected.

4. Applications under this RFA may not exceed $12,000,000 in federal funds; applications exceeding $12,000,000 federal funding will be rejected.

5. 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.D.2 with respect to the Project Narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.D.2 establishes a 20-page, single-spaced Project Narrative page limit.

6. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the 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.

7. 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 or relevant https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application via e-mail with Matthew Richardson at treatmentworksRFA@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

8. Eligible activities include training and technical assistance only. Infrastructure construction projects such as repairing water or sewer lines, adding new equipment, or upgrading, retrofitting or rehabilitating existing equipment are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

9. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

Section IV. Application 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 OMS-ARM-OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) *at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement* to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

Mailing Address:
OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand

USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

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

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

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

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above and will aim to respond timely 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 application 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, 2020, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2020). 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, 2020 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2021, the applicant would need a

new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2021. 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. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions

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

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

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

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to Grants.gov and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OW-OWM-20-02, or the Assistance Listing number that applies to the announcement (Assistance Listing 66.446), in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

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

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov. The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **May 17, 2021, by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET) in order to be considered for funding.** Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (Grants.gov) no later than **May 17, 2021 in order to be considered for funding.** Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application 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 accessed using the instructions above.

Application Materials
The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre-Award Compliance Review Report
5. Project Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IV of the announcement

Optional Documents:

6. Other Attachments Form – Biographical Sketches
7. Other Attachments Form – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, 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 Matthew Richardson, at (202) 564-2947 or via treatmentworksRFA@epa.gov. 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 does 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 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 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 https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

   a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling (606) 545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact those listed in Section VII.
   b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, and you have already attempted to resolve the issue by contacting Grants.gov, send an email message to the contacts listed in Section VII 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 fromGrants.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 the contacts listed in Section VII 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.

D. Content of Application Package Submission

Applicants should read the following section very carefully. A complete application package must include the following documents described below.

1. Application Materials

a. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance. Complete the form. There are no attachments. The organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included in 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.

b. **SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.** The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period 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.

c. **EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54.** Complete the form. Attach additional forms as needed.

d. **EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report.** Complete the form. There are no attachments.

e. **Project Narrative. See Section IV.D.2** (Project Narrative) for details on specific information that must be included. When developing the Project Narrative, applicants should refer to Section I.B of the announcement which provides a project description.

f. **Biographical Sketches.** Submit a biographical sketch of each major project manager, support staff member, or other major project participant (see Section IV.D.2.C.6.b, below).

g. **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** (if indirect costs are included in your proposed project budget). Complete this form if indirect costs are included in the proposed project budget. You must submit a copy of your organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed project budget includes indirect costs.

2. Project Narrative

NOTE: The Project Narrative must include sections A-C below. The Project Narrative (covering sections A-C below) is limited to no more than twenty (20) typewritten, single spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper) including the cover page and executive summary. 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 Project Narrative. **Additional pages beyond the 20-page limit will not be considered.** Supporting materials, which are limited to biographical sketches and full resumes as described below, are not included within the page limit.

The application's Project Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the Project Narrative.

A. Cover Page: Including:

1. Project title;
2. Name of applicant;
3. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number); and
4. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested and the total project cost).

B. Executive Summary: Provide a brief summary of the proposed project (should not exceed one page). This should include a brief description of the proposed project and the anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes.

C. Workplan: The workplan must address the following:

1. **Training and Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works for the Prevention, Reduction, and Elimination of Pollution:** Describe your approach for addressing the three required components in Section I.B of this announcement. Highlight and describe any non-traditional or innovative approaches that are proposed in addition to conventional or traditional approaches for addressing the training and technical assistance objectives. Describe how these non-traditional or innovative approaches in addition to conventional or traditional approaches show the potential to more effectively reach the intended audience than conventional or traditional means only. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the proposed project. Describe the process for consulting with the appropriate regulatory authority in each state, tribe or territory prior to initiating training and technical assistance activities. Include a process for reporting back to those authorities, to the EPA Project Officer and to the appropriate EPA regional coordinators regarding the assistance provided and documented results.
2. **Provision of Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis:** Describe the proposed approach to making face-to-face/on-site and/or remote training and technical

assistance available nationally in a maximum number of states, tribes and U.S. territories (see Sections I.B and I.C). The proposed approach may also include developing training materials, developing and maintaining websites, or developing and providing educational materials that can be used in each state/territory and/or with state/territory-specific variations, as appropriate. Applicants should include in their description how they propose to deliver trainings in person under normal circumstances and how they will deliver the trainings if in-person training is not possible due to impacts related to COVID-19 (e.g., under quarantine situations, if social distancing is required in your locale). Alternative trainings due to the impacts of COVID-19 may include switching from in-person formats to online only or reducing the number of participants in each training to allow participants to be located six feet apart from each other. Describe how the approach is thorough, flexible and tailored to the specific needs of each target audience. Describe your approach for reaching out to tribally owned and operated treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems and how you will provide training and technical assistance to these systems. Provide a brief description of how you will transfer results, effective compliance strategies and resources developed (such as tools and training materials) to interested stakeholders such as other small publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, states, territories, tribes, local governments, and home owners through the development and dissemination of training and educational materials, websites or other means.

3. **Environmental Results and Measuring Progress**:
   a. Stated Objective/Link to the EPA Strategic Plan - List the objective of the project and the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment: Deliver a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment for all Americans and future generations by carrying out the Agency's core mission, Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water (see Section I.D of this announcement).
   b. Results of Activities (Outputs) - Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project, and describe an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).
   c. Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements that will be accomplished as a result of the project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment or public health which are a result of the accomplishment of the work plan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).

4. **Milestone Schedule:** Provide a projected milestone schedule for the proposed project period (up to 18 months). The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and 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.

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

   Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs and total cost. All subawardee funding should be located in the "other" cost category. Describe itemized costs in enough detail for EPA to determine the allowability of costs for each project component/task, as well as the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs.

6. **Programmatic Capability/Experience/Community Support:**
   a. Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of your organization and experience related to the proposed project, and your 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 experience/expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project, including demonstrated knowledge of state, tribal and local regulations and policies relevant to the training and technical assistance. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). If you choose to identify any partner organizations who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants) please refer to Section IV.E before doing so as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless you select them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. A biographical sketch must be submitted for each major project manager, support staff member or other major project participant. Biographical sketches are not counted in the page limit. Full resumes may be included as an appendix to the application narrative and are not counted in the page limit.

7. **Past Performance:** Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not 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 the 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 an applicant's past performance, the Agency will consider the

information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and/or from current and prior federal agency grantors/cooperative agreements(e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, please indicate this in the application, and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. Failure to provide any programmatic past performance or reporting information, or to include a statement 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).

8. **Quality Assurance/Quality Control:** Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) (not included in the 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: The applicant should also provide in the Project Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already addressed above, that addresses the selection criteria in Section V.

D. Submission Dates and Times: The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **May 17, 2021, by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET) in order to be considered for funding**. Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (Grants.gov) no later than **May 17, 2021 in order to be considered for funding.** Late applications will not be considered for funding.

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

Section V. Application Review Information

A. Selection Criteria

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

(25 points)	**1) Training and Technical Assistance for Wastewater Treatment Works for the Prevention, Reduction, and Elimination of Pollution** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability and approach for effectively addressing the three required components described in Section I.B of this announcement. In conducting this evaluation, the following factors will be considered. i. The extent and quality of the overall approach to addressing the three components. (15 points) ii. The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates an effective process for consultation with the appropriate regulatory authority in each state, tribe, or territory prior to initiating training and technical assistance activities, and for keeping these authorities informed regarding the implementation and outcome of training and technical assistance activities. (5 points) iii. The extent to which the applicant includes non-traditional or innovative approaches in addition to conventional approaches in addressing the training and technical assistance objectives of the RFA. (5 points)
(25 points)	**2) Providing Training and Technical Assistance on a National Basis** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability and approach for making training and technical assistance available nationally in a maximum number of states, tribes and U.S. territories (see Section I.C of this announcement) taking into account the following factors. i. The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates the ability to provide training and technical assistance in a maximum number of states and U.S. territories through face-to-face/on-site training and/or through remote means. (10 points) ii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates an effective process for reaching out to tribally owned and operated treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems and providing training and technical assistance to these systems. (5 points) iii. The extent and quality to which the applicant's strategy utilizes flexibility to tailor the training and technical assistance techniques and resources to address the specific needs of the target audience in as many states, tribes and U.S. territories as possible. (5 points) iv. The extent and quality of an approach to transfer results, effective compliance strategies, and resources developed to interested stakeholders nationally. (5 points)

(10 points)	**3) Environmental Results and Measuring Progress** Applications will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criteria. i. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outputs and outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan described in Section I.D of this announcement. (5 points) ii. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement). (5 points)
(10 points)	**4) Milestone Schedule/Detailed Budget** Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the application addresses each of the following sub-criteria**.** i. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy and completeness of the milestone schedule, including 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) ii. The 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. The cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs will be evaluated. (5 points)
(20 points)	**5) Programmatic Capability/Experience/Community Support** Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering the following. i. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their infrastructure as it relates to the ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (10 points) ii. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project, including demonstrated knowledge of state and local regulations and policies relevant to the training or technical assistance. (10 points)

(10 points)	**6) Past Performance** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering the following. i. Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size and scope to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). (4 points) ii. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size and scope to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. (2 points) iii. Extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (4 points) Note: In evaluating applicants under (i), (ii) and (iii) above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and/or prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history must indicate that in the application and they will receive a neutral score (half of the points) for the factor (i.e., 2 point for item (i), 1 point for item (ii), and 2 point for item (iii)). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factor (i.e., 0 points for item (i), 0 points for item (ii), and 0 points for item (iii)).

B. Review and Selection Process

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

A panel comprised of EPA staff will review the eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V. A ranked list will be developed based on the panel evaluation. The ranked list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes the final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions the Selection Official will consider the application score/ranking and may also take into account geographic distribution of funds and programmatic priorities such as ensuring that rural, small, and tribal publicly owned treatment works and decentralized wastewater treatment systems receive training and technical assistance that facilitates compliance with important federal and state regulations. As noted above, while EPA expects to make up to four cooperative agreements, it reserves the right not to do so.

C. 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 (https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses) page. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

Section VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Following EPA's evaluation of the applications, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance, nor is it a guarantee that the award will be made. The official notification of an award will be made by the Grants and Interagency Agreements Management Division.

Applicants are cautioned that only an 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 Award Official, 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 cooperative agreement can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a cooperative agreement can

take up to 90 days or longer.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final award amount and workplan narrative prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each component;
3. Commitments for each component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the commitments.

B. 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 the EPA Solicitation Clauses (https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The general award and administration process for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 2 CFR 200 and 1500, as applicable. A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in the cooperative agreement will be included in the final assistance agreement.

D. 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 work plan consistent with 2 CFR 200 and 1500, and 40 CFR Part 45, as appropriate.

E. 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 (https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-competition-dispute-resolution-procedures). Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the contacts 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.

Section 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 applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications. 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 application, and requests for clarification about any of the language or provisions in the announcement. Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contacts identified in Section VII of this announcement as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting a proposal. In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination.

Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **April 27, 2021** and written responses and answers to FAQs will be posted on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/technical-assistance-treatment-works. EPA strongly recommends interested applicants refer to the FAQs webpage prior to submitting a question.

Agency Contact: Matthew Richardson e-mail: treatmentworksRFA@epa.gov.

Section VIII. Other Information

A. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements may apply to these funds (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. Successful applicants should allow enough time and resources for this process. EPA can assist successful applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the successful applicant may work with EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate

QA/QC practices for the project. See Section VII, Agency Contact for Agency Contact information for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

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 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 https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data-wqx.

B. Data Sharing

All recipients of these assistance agreements may be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.