United States Geological Survey

USGS Earthquake Hazards Program External Research Support Announcement for Fiscal Year 2025

https://www.usgs.gov/programs/earthquake-hazards/science/external-grants

Notice of Funding Opportunity - Fiscal Year 2025
Funding Opportunity Number (FON) G25AS00240

Closing Date: 05/23/2024

Table of Contents

A. Program Description 2
A1. Authority 2
A2. Background, Purpose and Program Requirements 2
B. Federal Award Information 5
B1. Total Funding 5
B2. Award Amount 5
B3. Anticipated Award Funding and Dates 6
B4. Number of Awards 6
B5. Type of Award 6
C. Eligibility Information 6
C1. Eligible Applicants 6
C2. Cost Sharing or Matching 7
C3. Other 7
D. Application and Submission Information 7
D1. Address to Request Application Package 11
D2. Content and Form of Application Submission 13
D3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) 22
D4. Submission Dates and Times 22
D5. Intergovernmental Review 23
D6. Funding Restrictions 23
D7. Other Submission Requirements 25
E. Application Review Information 26
E1. Criteria 26
E2. Review and Selection Process 27
E3. CFR – Regulatory Information 29
E4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates 29
F. Federal Award Administration Information 29
F1. Federal Award Notices 29
F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements 29
F3. Reporting 30
G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s) 31
G1. Program Technical Contact 31

G2. Program Administration Contact 32
G3. Application System Technical Support 32
H. Other Information 33
General Information 35
Summary 35
Award Information 35
Key Dates 35
Eligibility Information 36
Additional Information 36

A. Program Description

A1. Authority

The USGS Earthquake Hazards Program (EHP) issues this annual Announcement for assistance to support research in earthquake hazards, the physics of earthquakes, earthquake occurrence, and earthquake safety policy and address the Department of Interior's Secretarial priorities related to centering equity and environmental justice in everything we do. This activity is authorized by the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-124, 42 U.S.C. 7701 et. seq.), and as amended by the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-307).

Grants.gov Subscription:
Principal Investigators (PIs) are urged to sign up for Grants.gov's subscription service to receive notices about the Earthquake Hazards Program grant funding opportunities and possible updates during the application period. Sign up is through the Grants.gov website; our CFDA number is 15.807.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number
15.807

A2. Background, Purpose and Program Requirements

Research Priorities:
The Research Priorities presented in Attachment A reflect the mission of the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program (EHP) and address the Department of Interior's Secretarial priorities related to centering equity and environmental justice in everything we do. Applicants must review the high-priority targets listed in Attachment A for each region and topic in addition to the four major program elements described in Attachment A to determine if an application is appropriate under this Program Announcement. **Proposals should clearly address both applicable program element(s) and priority topic(s).**

Application Requirements:

A.

1. Proposals must be for a duration of either one or two years with a clearly stated objective for the requested term. For more detail on requirements for 2-year proposals, see Section titled "Two-Year Proposals" below.
2. The majority, greater than 50 percent, of research activities must be conducted by the Applicant. The Applicant must retain administrative and technical control of project activities.
3. Proposals for geologic investigations shall be clearly oriented toward earthquake hazard research and assessment. Research Priorities are described in Attachment A.
4. USGS personnel are prohibited from assisting any organization in preparing its proposal for competitive funding under this Program Announcement.
5. Proposals to fund research in foreign countries will be considered only if the research is clearly oriented toward providing new knowledge or new techniques transferable to a U.S. seismogenic zone.

B.

1. Proposals to fund research in foreign countries must be based on cooperation with scientific groups in the host countries, with host country personnel being used for operational functions, and host countries providing financial support for such personnel. Proposals involving foreign governments or foreign individuals may require additional coordination and approval by the U.S. Department of State.
2. Applications submitted by foreign organizations must be submitted in English and in U.S. dollars.
3. Proposals must include a Data Management Plan. See Section D.2 for instructions.

Involvement of Federal Employees:

Federal employees, including USGS employees, **are prohibited from serving in any capacity** (paid or unpaid) on any application submitted under this Announcement; federal employees may not assist in the development of proposals. Proposals that have a real or apparent conflict of interest related to Federal employees will not be processed for evaluation. This does not prohibit cooperation or collaboration between USGS and non-USGS scientists once a grant or cooperative agreement is in place. Section A2 describes Collaborative Proposals.

Out-of-Cycle Awards:

The USGS may accept proposals outside of the normal competitive cycle under **very limited** circumstances:

1. Research proposals may be accepted and approved out-of-cycle (after the closing date) only in cases where there is compelling circumstance or emergency (*e.g.*, seismic event), which must be acted on before the next competitive review cycle. Proposers should contact the appropriate Regional or Topical Coordinator prior to submitting out-of-cycle proposals.
2. Congress mandates directed awards to support activities that evaluate earthquake hazards and losses. In this case, the USGS will solicit applications.

Collaborative Proposals:

Two types of collaborative proposals are acceptable: 1.) Collaboration between two or more external organizations that are seeking funding from the USGS/EHP External Research Support and 2.) Collaboration between an external organization seeking such funding and a USGS internal project. Collaborative proposals are **not** instances where persons from a second organization are hired as consultants or other contractual agreements to conduct work on behalf of the grant or cooperative agreement recipient.

Please note that collaborative research between a USGS internal project and external investigator(s) must be structured such that neither project could succeed without the other being funded. While many external research projects either directly or indirectly support or cooperate with ongoing internal USGS projects, these projects are **not** considered collaborative projects because their research objectives can be pursued with or without the existence of the internal USGS research.

A.

1. For collaborative proposals that propose work by two or more separate institutions or organizations, each individual organization must accept responsibility for specific parts of the work proposed. A separate proposal must be submitted from each external organization involved in collaborative studies. Except for **separate** budgets, which clearly reflect their objectives and responsibilities, all other sections of each proposal shall be **identical,** and each proposal must clearly define the objectives to be performed by each organization.
2. Each Principal Investigator and his/her institution that is recommended for funding will receive a separate grant or cooperative agreement and shall accept financial responsibility for administering the grant and technical responsibility for submitted required technical reports.
3. Collaborative proposals must be clearly identified in the proposal title. The application title shall read "Proposal Title: Collaborative Research with First Institution name, and Second Institution name."

B.

1. Recipient of collaborative awards must submit one Progress Report (for 2 -year awards) and one Final Technical Report, incorporating the efforts of all collaborators.
2. USGS reserves the right to fund only some of the Applicants involved in a collaborative study.

IMPORTANT: In the case of collaborative proposals involving external organizations and USGS scientists, the external proposal **MUST include the collaboration letter template, filled out and signed by the relevant internal USGS scientist(s) and their direct supervisor. The collaboration letter template is included in this Announcement as Attachment B**, which states that the scientist(s) will include specific efforts in his/her agreed-upon internal work plan for the period of time of the proposal to EHP. The scientists' supervisor must also sign the form in showing their approval of the work. Any letters provided by USGS scientists that do not use the template provided in Attachment B **WILL BE REMOVED from consideration prior to proposal review and your proposal will be at risk for rejection.** The letter template may also

be used for USGS scientists to confirm their commitment of providing resources (providing datasets, equipment, etc.) instead of a collaborative effort. The signed collaboration/commitment statement will be the last page(s) of the submitted proposal and will not count toward the 15-page limit.

Two-year Proposals:
Most proposals are funded for one year; all work that can be completed in one year should be proposed as a one-year project. However, if the proposed work is such that two years **are required** to complete the research, then a two-year proposal is appropriate and should be submitted. Applicants should carefully consider their time commitments and request the required grant duration and funding to accomplish the project goals. The peer review panel may recommend funding only the first year of a two-year proposal when the proposed research is easily divided into two, one-year projects or when they feel that results from the first year's proposed work will need to be evaluated before a second year of research can be considered. Applicants should be sure to address the stipulations for two-year proposals in Section D2., Project Narrative Item F.2: Project Plan.

The second year of funding of a two-year grant is contingent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory progress by the Recipient. Progress will be determined through technical review of a Progress Report by the External Research Coordinator and his or her agent. The Progress Report shall be submitted by the Recipient, in accordance with grant award Special Terms and Conditions (see Attachment E).

Funding Opportunity Goals
Research for natural hazards, energy and mineral resources, ecosystems and environmental health, and water resources.

B. Federal Award Information

B1. Total Funding

Estimated Total Funding
$5,000,000

B2. Award Amount

Maximum Award
$0

Minimum Award
$0
It is estimated that a total of $4 million will be awarded in support of competitive research grants in FY2025, with a maximum total of $7 million. Based on awards in recent years, 60 to 80 new awards are funded each fiscal year. There is no maximum award amount (i.e., any amount may be proposed if it can be justified appropriately), however, the majority of grants range between

$30,000 and $100,000. This estimate does not bind the USGS to a specified number of awards or to the amount of any award unless that amount is specified by statute or regulation.

B3. Anticipated Award Funding and Dates

Anticipated Award Date

January 01, 2025

All projects must propose **start dates between January 1, 2025 and September 1, 2025**. The start date requested in the applicant's submitted proposal is considered the applicant's official start date and may not be changed by the applicant. If funding delays do not allow for a project to be funded by the applicant's requested start date, the award will be issued as soon as funds become available, and the applicant will be notified of the new start date by the USGS Contracting Officer. Applicants **must** indicate if the proposed start date is **fixed or flexible** based on the research activities (field work, etc.) of the proposal. This must be indicated on the Proposal Information Summary Template (Attachment C).

B4. Number of Awards

Expected Number of Awards

60

B5. Type of Award

Funding Instrument Type

G - Grant

C. Eligibility Information

C1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible Applicants

25 – Others (see text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility" for clarification)
99 – Unrestricted (i.e. open to any type of entity above), subject to any clarification in the text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility"

Additional Information on Eligibility

This Announcement is open to all individuals and entities EXCEPT for the ineligible categories listed below.

The following proposals are **NOT** eligible for consideration under this Announcement:

A. Proposals for regional seismic monitoring or establishing Data Centers.
B. Proposals for long-term operation of geodetic networks or instruments.

C. Proposals from U.S. Government agencies or U.S. Government employees.
D. Proposals from Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC).
E. Proposals in which there is a real or apparent conflict of interest.
F. Proposals principally involving the direct procurement of a product, equipment, or service.
G. Proposals having subcontracts for 50 percent or greater of total direct costs.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. 6301–6308), the United States Geological Survey is authorized to continue existing, and on and after November 10, 2003, to enter into new cooperative agreements directed towards a particular cooperator, in support of joint research and data collection activities with Federal,State, and academic partners funded by appropriations herein, including those that provide for space in cooperator facilities.

C2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

No

C3. Other

Excluded Parties: USGS conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. USGS cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

D. Application and Submission Information

Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures

Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures

This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) program applications. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

1. Electronic Delivery

USGS is participating in the Grants.gov initiative to provide the grant community with a single site to find and apply for grant funding opportunities. USGS encourages applicants to submit their applications online through Grants.gov.

2. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

a. *Instructions:* Read the instructions below about registering to apply for USGS funds. Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewingand assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required informati

Organizations must have an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration, and Grants.gov account to apply for grants. If individual applicants are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity, then you may begin with step 3, Create a Grants.gov Account, listed below.

Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but SAM registration may take several weeks.Therefore, an organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact the entity's ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Note: An entity will be assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) by SAM. No Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) number is required after April 4, 2022.

Complete organization instructions can be found on Grants.gov here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

1) *Register with SAM*: All organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the System forAward Management (SAM). Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register- with-sam.html

2) *Create a Grants.gov Account*: The next step is to register an account with Grants.gov. Follow the on-screen instructions or refer to the detailed instructions here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html

3) *Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account*: A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant. If you work for or consult with multipleorganizations and have a profile for each, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all of your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter UEI assigned by SAM in the UEI field while adding a profile. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html

4) *EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles*: After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization ApplicantProfile, the organization applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been assigned the AOR role. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html

5)*Track Role Status*: To track your role request, refer to:https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html

b. *Electronic Signature*: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role; **this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

3. How to Submit an Application to USGS via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement (FOA), you can create individual instances of a workspace.

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to:

https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

1) *Create a Workspace*: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

2) *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html

b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms:* In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and UEI Number. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

3) *Submit a Workspace*: An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

4) *Track a Workspace Submission*: After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist the USGS with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

4. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

a. *Online Submission.* All applications must be received by the due date established for each program. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. This applicant with the AOR role will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When USGS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by USGS.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role attempting to submit the application. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

IMPORTANT NOTE: On April 4, 2022, the Federal government will transition to using the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in place of the DUNS number to uniquely identify entities doing business with the government. As of that date, all entities receiving grants or cooperative agreements from the Department of the Interior (DOI) will be required to have a Unique Entity Identifier created in SAM.gov. Information pertaining to this transition, including instructions on how to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier can be located on the SAM.gov UEI webpage.

As a result of this transition, DOI grant and cooperative agreement recipients should be aware of the following information:

- The DUNS number, assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, will remain the official Identifier for all DOI recipients through April 3, 2022.
- The UEI number, assigned by SAM.gov, will become the official identifier for all DOI recipients as of April 4, 2022.
- All active entities with a SAM.gov registration should now have a UEI assigned within SAM.gov.
- Questions and concerns pertaining to an entity's UEI should be directed to the SAM.gov helpdesk.

For entities that may be submitting an application for a DOI grant or cooperative agreement, please be aware of the following DOI guidance. Please note that the guidance below may be supplemented by additional guidance from DOI programs or Bureaus:

- All grant or cooperative agreement applications submitted to DOI on or after April 1, 2022 must use version 4 of the SF-424 form that contains the UEI number in place of the DUNS. After April 1, the DOI will no longer be able to accept applications submitted using the SF-424 version 3 (or earlier versions) containing a DUNS number.
- For applications submitted on or before March 31, 2022, applications shall be submitted using version 3 of the SF-424 form, unless a different version is specifically identified within the announcement.
- Please note that any applications submitted using the version 3 of the SF-424 form containing a DUNS number must be received and accepted by the DOI no later than March 31, 2022.

Please direct any questions or concerns to your Bureau Awarding Office.

D1. Address to Request Application Package

Electronic Application Requirement:

For the FY2025 funding cycle all proposals shall be submitted electronically via Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Hard/paper submissions will NOT be accepted. Electronic copies submitted via e-mail will NOT be accepted under any circumstances. All proposals must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov on or before:

May 23, 2024, at 6 pm, Eastern Daylight Time

Please be aware that the electronic submission process requires first time users to register using an e- Authentication process. This registration process can be somewhat complex and can take up to 3 weeks to complete. Be advised that it is virtually impossible to begin the process of electronic submission for the first time if you start just a few days before the due date. If you are from a university, contact your Office of Sponsored Programs. They may

already have completed the registration process and should work with you to submit the application.

If you have any questions or problems with the registration process, or the completion of the application package, please contact the grants.gov help desk at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Briefly, when you submit a grant application package to Grants.gov, you will receive a confirmation screen as well as three additional emails over two business days from Grants.gov informing you of your application processing status:

A.

1. Confirmation screen
2. Submission Receipt (with "Track My Application" link)
3. Submission Validation (or Rejection with Errors)
4. Agency Retrieval

CONFIRMATION: Submission Confirmation Screen.
After you submit your grant application package, a confirmation screen will appear on your computer screen. This screen confirms that you have submitted an application to Grants.gov.

NOTIFICATION 1: Submission Receipt Email
Within two business days after your application package has been received by the Grants.gov system, you will receive a submission receipt email which indicates that your submission has entered the Grants.gov system and is ready for validation. This email also contains a tracking number for use while tracking the status of the submission as well as a "Track My Application" link, to use to see the progress of your submission.

NOTIFICATION 2: Submission Validation Receipt Email – This is the important one!
After you receive the submission receipt email, the next email you will receive will be a message validating or rejecting your submitted application package with errors. The Grants.gov system is designed to check for technical errors within the submitted application package. Grants.gov does not review application content for award determination. Grants.gov will not post the application if there are errors. **Failure to correct errors and submit by the date and time for closing shall not be a reason for accepting a late application.**

NOTIFICATION 3: Grantor Agency Retrieval Email
Once your application package has passed validation it is delivered to the grantor for award determination and further approval. After the grantor has confirmed receipt of your application, you will be sent a **third and final email** from Grants.gov. The grantor may also assign your application package an agency specific tracking number for use within their internal system. IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED THIS E-MAIL WITHIN FOUR DAYS OF THE CLOSING DATE, PLEASE CONTACT THE CONTRACTING OFFICER.

If you need help entering your proposal, you can reach the **Grants.gov Contact Center at:** 1-800-518-4726. Their hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Eastern

Time, and they are closed on Federal Holidays.

During the application period an applicant may submit a revised or corrected proposal through grants.gov. Include a cover letter as the first page of the proposal stating that the proposal is revised and indicating that the previous submittal is to be withdrawn from consideration. Such submissions must be completed by **May 23, 2024 at 6:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time.**

See Section D2., Project Narrative, which describes requirements for the proposal and other application components.

Please allow sufficient time for the proposal to be submitted electronically through Grants.gov and allow time for possible computer delays. Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last minute for submission. A proposal received after the closing date and time will NOT be considered for award. If the USGS determines that a proposal will not be considered for award due to lateness, the applicant will be notified immediately.

Program Website Link

https://www.usgs.gov/programs/earthquake-hazards/science/external-grants

D2. Content and Form of Application Submission

1. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

Applicants must submit the appropriate Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. The required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. The SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance must be complete, signed, and dated. Do not include any proprietary or personally identifiable information. Please note: Enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in the "Federal" funding box on the SF-424 Application form. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the "Other" box and provide details on those Federal source(s) and funding amount(s) in the required Budget Narrative (see the "Budget Narrative" section below).

Application Preparation Instructions:

NOTE CHANGES FOR FY25!

1. **Proposal page limit is now *15* pages, maximum. See "IMPORTANT" below for new and updated details.**
2. **Annual salary cap for all personnel listed in each proposal will be applied starting in FY25. See "Detailed Budget", under Project Narrative, Section B.3 below for new and updated details.**

   Your electronic submission shall consist of forms SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B, plus the items described below. No additional documents or materials may be submitted. **Failure to comply with the required application components listed below may result in the proposal being rejected.** The USGS cannot request or receive supplemental or replacement application components after the closing date/time under this Program Announcement.

In the Grants.gov forms, floating your mouse over a field will provide instructions for completing that field. You can also click on the Check Package for Errors button to check the entire application for validation errors (incomplete fields, etc.)

To view complete forms instructions, please visit the Grants.gov Forms Repository at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html

!!IMPORTANT!!: Items as described below shall be combined into *ONE* (1) document, in the order noted below, and submitted through Grants.gov in either MS Word or PDF format. The application shall not exceed 15 single-spaced pages (including figures, tables, appendices, etc.), and the **type size shall not be smaller than 11 point**. All pages of the application shall be numbered. All text, figures, and tables shall be sized to fit on 8½" by 11" paper. **The SF forms, data management plan, references, curriculum vitae, letters of support from institutions outside the USGS and any USGS scientist collaboration/commitment statement form do NOT count toward the 15-page limit.** The application shall be in color as needed for review by peer review panel members.

Project Narrative

The application submitted through grants.gov as the **Project Narrative Attachment Form** (in MS Word or PDF format) and shall be **assembled in the following order and combined in ONE document:**

A.

1. **Proposal Information Summary.** This summary is **mandatory** for the Grants.gov submittal for each proposal. The same format, with ALL information as **shown in Attachment C** shall be included in each applicant's Grants.gov submittal. The two- or three-letter panel designation (also known as Regional or Topical Area), found in Section E2 and Attachment A, shall be indicated in Item 1 of Attachment C. Only **ONE** panel designation may be chosen per proposal. **If you do not submit this page, your proposal will be rejected**.
2. **Project Abstract Summary**. The abstract shall be no longer than one single-spaced page. The Project Abstract Summary for all financial assistance awards is **required** to be submitted in the following format (**include the bulleted title and the response - DO NOT PROVIDE IN PARAGRAPH FORMAT**):
   • Include a plain language description Award purpose (avoid acronyms or Federal or agency-specific terminology);
   • Activities to be performed;
   • Deliverables and Expected Outcomes;
   • Intended beneficiary(ies) as well as
   • Subrecipient activities, if known or specified at the time of award.

NOTE: Upon issuance of the grant, this Project Abstract Summary will be publicly available at USAspending.gov.

B.

1. **Table of Contents**.
2. **Budget Summary.** The proposed budget shall be presented in two parts: a one-page summary, which shall be in the format shown in Attachment D. The detailed budget is described below.
3. **Detailed Budget**. The detailed proposed budget shall be keyed to the Budget Summary. Non-federal funds available to support the project may be reflected in the detailed budget or the SF 424, as appropriate.

For **two-year projects**: The Applicant shall provide summary information (see Attachment D) as well as a detailed budget for the second year. The SF 424 shall reflect both years.

The detailed budget **must** include the amount proposed for each of the following items in this order:

1. Salaries and wages. Identify individuals by name and position, estimated hours or percent of time, and the rate of compensation proposed. Include an explanation of the amounts included for projected increases if the rate of pay shown is higher than the current rate of pay. Identify each person with an objective in the project. **Principal Investigator and senior staff time should be limited with the majority of salary for students and junior staff.**

!!IMPORTANT!!: As a general policy (without strong justification), USGS EHP limits the salary compensation requested in the proposal budget (and therefore awarded) for senior personnel to no more than *two* months of their regular salary in any one year. Additionally, USGS funding in support of salaries under awards made pursuant to this NOFO shall be capped at Executive level II rate (https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/24Tab les/exec/html/EX.aspx), where salary rate is calculated as a full-time calendar year appointment. Any difference between the salary paid to recipient personnel and the salary cap shall be borne by the recipient. Tuition remission and other forms of compensation paid as, or in lieu of, wages to students performing necessary work are allowable provided that the tuition or other payments are reasonable compensation for the work performed and are conditioned explicitly upon the performance of the work. Tuition and/or tuition remission should be identified in this section of the budget.

2. Fringe benefits/labor overhead. Indicate the rates/amounts in conformance with normal accounting procedures. Explain what costs are covered in this category and the basis of the rate computations. Indicate whether rates are used for proposal purposes only or whether they are also fixed or provisional rates for billing purposes.

3. Equipment. Show the cost of all special-purpose equipment necessary for achieving the objectives of the project. "Special-purpose equipment" means scientific equipment having a useful life of more than 1 year and having an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per item. Each item should be itemized and

include a full justification and a dealer or manufacturer quote, if available. General-purpose equipment must be purchased from the applicant's operating funds. Title to non-expendable personal property shall be vested solely with the Recipient. Under **no** circumstances shall property title be vested in a sub-tier recipient.

4. Supplies. Enter the cost for all tangible property. Include the cost of office, laboratory, computing, and field supplies separately. Provide detail on any specific item, which represents a significant portion of the proposed amount. If fabrication of equipment is proposed, list parts and materials required for each and show costs separately from the other items.

5.Services or consultants. Identify the objectives or problems for which such services would be used. List the contemplated sub-recipients by name (including consultants), the estimated amount of time required, and the quoted rate per day or hour. If known, state whether the consultant's rate is the same as she/he has received for similar services or under Government contracts or assistance awards. Note the restriction on sub-recipients efforts indicated in section 4. Application Requirements.

6. Radiocarbon or other dating. Include the **type of analyses, number of samples, cost per sample, and facility** likely to perform the analyses. **IMPORTANT: If the dating is to be done at a national lab, include the full contact information for the contact at the lab.; a separate award will be made to the national lab, however, include the national lab costs within the grant application budget.**

7. Travel. State the purpose of the trip and itemize the estimate travel costs to show the number of trips required, the destinations, the number of people traveling, the per diem rates, the cost of transportation, and any miscellaneous expenses for each trip. For travel requested to meetings or conferences, include a description of the benefit to the proposed project. Failure to provide this information may result in a determination of the cost as unallowable. Calculations of other special transportation costs (such as charges for use of applicant-owned vehicles or vehicle rental costs) should also be shown.

8. Publication costs. Show the estimated cost of publishing the results of the research. Include costs of drafting or graphics, reproduction, page or illustration charges.

9. Other direct costs. Itemize the different types of costs not included elsewhere; such as, shipping, telemetry, computing, and equipment-use charges, not specifically identified for other budget sections, above. Provide breakdowns showing how the cost was estimated; for example, computer time should show the type of computer, estimated time of use, and the established rates.

10. Total direct costs. Total items 1 through 9.

11. Indirect cost/general and administrative (G&A) cost. Show the proposed rate, cost base, and proposed amount for allowable indirect costs based on the cost

principles applicable to the Applicant's organization. G&A should not be calculated for any tuition remission. If the Applicant has separate rates for recovery of labor overhead and G&A costs, each charge should be shown. Explain the distinction between items included in the two cost pools. The Applicant should propose rates for evaluation purposes, which they are also willing to establish as fixed or ceiling rates in any resulting award. NOTE: A copy of the indirect negotiated cost agreement with the Federal Government will be requested from all applicants recommended for an award. This request will be made at the time of recommendation notification. **The requirement for a negotiated rate agreement applies to ALL applicants including nonprofits, small businesses, and individuals. Please note that in the absence of a negotiated cost agreement, the maximum indirect rate that may be charged by a non-federal entity is 10% (see Section 200.414(f) of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards). Note that an individual is not considered a non-federal entity and as such may not charge the 10% de minimus rate of 10%.**

12. Amount proposed. Total items 10 and 11.

13. Applicant's contribution to Project Cost

14. Total Project Cost. Total Federal and non-Federal amounts, if any.

4. Proposal: The description of the proposed research shall consist of the following parts:

1. Significance of the Project. In a separate paragraph of the proposal, discuss the specific problem addressed and its importance. **Describe the significant contribution the project will make to one or more of the Priority Topics under the 10 Research Areas in Attachment A. This description is required.**

2. Project Plan. Discuss the specific hypotheses or research questions, the conceptual framework or model to be used, as well as the data collection and analysis plans, and relationship with past studies. Plans should also include procedures to be used to insure objectivity and balance in the project. Include project milestones and related due dates for the proposed work and required reports (See Attachment E, Sections 3 and 4). Time allocations, responsibilities for the project staff members, and level of effort for personnel **must** also be described separately for each year of the proposal; this is critical for two-year proposals.

3. Final Technical Report and Dissemination. The USGS considers dissemination of research data and results to potential users of those results to be an integral and crucial aspect of projects it funds. See Attachment E, Section 3: "Dissemination of Results and Reporting Requirements".

4. Related Efforts. Describe significant, related studies conducted by members of the research team and discuss any planned coordination with other workers in the field. Include descriptions of current and recent USGS/EHP External Research Support grants or cooperative agreements, the relationship of those to this

proposal (if any), and relevant results from previous grants or cooperative agreements.

5. Broader Impacts (Optional). It is strongly encouraged to include a statement that articulates the PI's plan for addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in specific aspects of the project.

6. Institutional Qualifications. State the resources available at, and the relevant experience of, the institution. Resources include personnel, computer and library facilities, and ties to both sources of data and potential users of the results.

7. Current Support and Pending Applications. List all sources of support (in addition to the proposed effort) to which the senior research members have committed a portion of their time for the period covered by the proposal. The information should account for 100 percent of the work time of each investigator and include titles, annual budget levels, period of the awards, and the person-months committed in each case. This section must also list research being considered by, or that will be submitted to, other possible sponsors. **If identical or similar work is also proposed to another institution (e.g., National Science Foundation), an explanation of the relationship of such work to this proposal should be provided.**

8. Current or Past IPA Appointments. List any Intergovernmental Personnel Act Appointments you or your co-Is or anyone on your Research Team has had or currently has with the USGS in the last 5 years. Include a description of the work completed during the appointment.

9. Past USGS-Supported Projects. List the total amount of funding per year for which support was provided by the USGS for previous work related to the proposed research effort, as well as the duration of each award (including no-cost extensions) and the total number of person-months committed by each Principal Investigator each year.

NOTE: Items 10-13 below DO NOT COUNT toward the 15-page limit.

10.Data Management Plan (DMP). **A DMP is required**. Instructions for writing an acceptable DMP are found in this Section under "Data Management Plan Requirements". **The DMP does not count toward the 15-page limit.**

11. References/Works Cited. The list of references/works cited **does not count toward the 15-page limit.**

12. Project Personnel and Bibliography of Directly Related Work. Provide curriculum vitae for all professional staff, summarizing education, experience, and the last five years' bibliographic information related to the proposed work; a length of one-page is recommended. Curriculum vitae for non-PI researchers who contribute significantly to the project **must** also be included. **Curriculum vitae will not count toward the 15-page limit.**

13. Letters of Support/USGS Scientist Signed Statement of Collaboration/Commitment. Letters of Support are useful for all proposals that

include coordination with or participation by researchers at institutions other than those submitting the proposal or from a USGS employee. **These letters do not count toward the 15-page limit.** Such letters are **NOT** acceptable from USGS scientists and **if included, WILL BE REMOVED from consideration prior to proposal review and your proposal will be at risk for rejection.** Instead, **a signed "USGS Scientist Collaboration/Commitment Statement Form"** is **REQUIRED and MUST be included if a USGS scientist intends to collaborate with or commit resources to the proposal Applicant.** The USGS Scientist Collaboration/Commitment Statement Form is included in this Announcement as **Attachment B**. The Applicant is responsible for providing the form to the USGS scientist to fill out and sign along with the USGS scientist's direct supervisor.

Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424 Budget Information form and Budget Narrative. For non-construction programs or projects, applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A, "Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs" form. All of the required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in 2 CFR 200.

Detailed Budget Narrative

The project budget shall include detailed information on all cost categories and must clearly identify all estimated project costs. Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors or sub-recipients. In addition, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the project budget, including the value of in-kind contributions of goods and services provided to complete the project when cost share is identified to be included (reference section C of this announcement). Cost categories can include, but are not limited to, those costs items included on the SF424A or SF424C.

See Attachment D., Budget Summary Template.

Data Management Plan Requirements

Proposals submitted to USGS must include a supplementary document of no more than four pages labeled "Data Management Plan" (DMP). This supplementary document should describe how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. A valid DMP may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed (e.g. "No data are expected to be produced from this project"), as long as the statement is accompanied by a clear justification. This supplementary document may include:

- the types of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, and other materials to be produced in the course of the project;
- the standards to be used for data and metadata format and content (where existing standards are absent or deemed inadequate, this should be documented along with any proposed solutions or remedies);
- policies for access and sharing including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights or requirements;

- provisions for re-use, re-distribution, and the production of derivatives; and
- plans for archiving data, samples, and other research products, and for preservation of free public access to them.

Additional guidance on data management plans is available from the USGS Data Management web site here: https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/data-management-plansSimultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include subawards are a single unified project and should include only one supplemental combined DMP by the lead PI that also addresses all subaward data management needs, regardless of the number of non-lead collaborative proposals or subawards included.

It is the expectation of the USGS that Principal Investigators **will publish the results** of funded research in peer- reviewed scientific or technical journals. Scientific or technical journals are NOT acceptable to satisfy the requirements of a Data Management Plan. The DMP must be written to follow the guidance above. In addition, all source data and data products and computer codes **must be made readily available** within the public domain upon completion of the project. **If you do not include a data management plan or a statement with justification that no plan is needed, your proposal will be rejected. The Data Management Plan will not count toward the 15-page limit.**

Conflict of Interest Disclosure
Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.112, applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

(a) *Applicability*.

(1) This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.

(2) In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by subrecipients, the conflict of interest provisions in 2 CFR 200.318 apply.

(b) *Notification*.

(1) Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with 2 CFR 200.112.

(2) Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by subrecipients.

(c) *Restrictions on lobbying*. Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under a grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to 43 CFR part 18 and 31 U.S.C. 1352.

(d) *Review procedures*. The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict of interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative

agreement, and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.

(e) Enforcement. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR part 180).

Single Audit Reporting Statement
All U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribal government, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.

Certification Regarding Lobbying
Applicants requesting more than $100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If this application requests more than $100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" form if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than $100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 and 31 USC 1352 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, "There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel". If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regards to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or

duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. The statement and the description of overlap or duplication, when applicable, may be provided within the proposal or as a separate attachment to the application. If at any time a proposal is awarded funds that would be overlapping or duplicative of the funding requested from USGS, the applicant must immediately notify the USGS point of contact. Any overlap or duplication of funding between the proposed project and other active or anticipated projects may impact selection and/or funding amount.

D3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration: This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as an individual (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own, operate, or work within), or any entity with an exception to bypass SAM.gov registration with prior approval from the funding bureau or office in accordance with bureau or office policy. All other applicants are required to register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) which replaces the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet in April 2022. A Federal award may not be made to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. Federal award recipients must also continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s).

Register with the System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants can register on the SAM.gov website. The "Help" tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov "Register with SAM" page also provides detailed instructions. Applicants can contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities will be assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been made to the entity's IRS information. There is no cost to register with SAM.gov. There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with SAM.gov; please be aware you can register and request help for free. If applicable, foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

D4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications
May 23, 2024

Application Due Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted via grants.gov no later than 6:00 p.m., EDT, on the listed application due date.

D5. Intergovernmental Review

Prior to application submission, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the OMB Office of Federal Financial Management website and view the "State Point of Contact (SPOC) List" to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." States not on the list do not participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located within a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to a Federal awarding agency. If your state is on the list, contact the designated entity for more information on the state's prior review requirements for Federal assistance applications.

D6. Funding Restrictions

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, you must not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget. Individuals are not required to submit any of the following statements regarding indirect costs.

The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the Interior Business Center by phone 916-930-3803 or using the IBC Email Submission Form. See the IBC Website for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients must have prior written approval from USGS to use amounts budgeted for direct costs to satisfy cost-share or match requirements or to cover unallowable indirect costs. Recipients shall not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Required Indirect Cost Statement to be submitted with Application
All organizations must include the applicable statement from the following list in their application, and attach to their application any documentation identified in the applicable statement:

We are:

- A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than $35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost

rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Attached is a copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification.

- A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than $35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We have prepared and will retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation.
- A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, do not use this statement] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: "Attached is a copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made." *or* "Attached is a copy of our current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement."]
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date.
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] against [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs). However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in §2 CFR 200.68]. We understand that we must notify USGS in writing if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization's indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% to be charged against modified total direct project costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.68. We understand that we must notify USGS in writing if we establish a negotiated rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by USGS.
- A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network", which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of 17.5%. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement per 2 CFR §1402.414. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with

our cognizant agency, we understand that we must charge indirect costs against the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR §200.68 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". We understand that we must request prior approval from USGS to use the 2 CFR 200 MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand that USGS approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR §200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.

- A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

D7. Other Submission Requirements

Award Terms and Conditions:

Award Recipients must comply with grant award Special Terms and Conditions (Attachment E). Submittal of an application constitutes the applicant's acceptance of these terms and conditions for inclusion in any award resulting from their application. Any concerns with the requirements of the Special Terms and Conditions shall be presented to the Contracting Officer at least three days prior to the closing date of the Announcement. Please be aware of the following are additional conditions:

1. No pre-award costs are authorized.
2. No-Cost Extensions to the Project Period: No-cost extensions are discouraged. The USGS/EHP awards grants and cooperative agreements for research that extends or supplements the ongoing research within the USGS. The timely conduct of funded projects is of great importance to the achievement of the goals of the program. Applicants should consider their time commitments at the time of applying for a grant. Requests for no-cost extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants should supply documentation supporting their request for an extension, as described in Attachment E, Section 5.
3. Supplemental Funds: Increases in funds beyond the amount awarded are also discouraged. The peer review panels recommend funding at a rate commensurate with their judgment of the scientific merit of a proposal and their expert knowledge of the expenses likely to be incurred in the conduct of the research. The USGS is aware that the course of any research cannot always be predicted. However, the bulk of the funds available for grants and cooperative agreements are expended early in the fiscal year and little is retained for expenses beyond emergencies or special opportunities for the program. Requests for increased funding will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants should supply documentation supporting their request for increased funding.
4. Dissemination of Results: When award recipients have completed their studies, a Final Technical Report must be submitted within 90 days; these reports will be posted at https://earthquake.usgs.gov/cfusion/external_grants/research.cfm. It is the expectation of the USGS that Principal Investigators will publish the results of funded research in peer-reviewed scientific or technical journals. However, scientific or technical journals are NOT acceptable to satisfy the requirements of a Data Management Plan. **In addition, all**

data products and computer codes must be made readily available within the public domain and the recipients' data management plan to ensure public data accessibility should be included in the Final Technical Report. See Attachment E, Section 3 and Section D, "Data Management Plan Requirements" for details on Data Management Planning.

E. Application Review Information

E1. Criteria

Criterion 1 **Maximum Points:** 0

Description	Weight 20%
EHP Research Priorities and Secretary of the Interior Priorities	The Research Priorities presented in Attachment A reflect the mission of the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program (EHP) and address the Department of Interior's Secretarial priorities related to centering equity and environmental justice in everything we do. Applicants must review the high-priority targets listed in Attachment A for each region and topic in additional to the four major program elements described in Attachment A to determine if application is appropriate under this Program Announcement. **Proposals should clearly address both applicable program element(s) and priority topic(s).**

Criterion 2 **Maximum Points:** 0

Relevance and Timeliness	Weight 20%
Review of relevant research proposed and timeliness for USGS priorities.	This factor considers the relevance and timeliness of the proposed research activities as they relate to the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program goals and address the Department of Interior's Secretarial priorities, including regional emphasis where appropriate (see Attachment A).

Criterion 3 **Maximum Points:** 0

Technical Quality	Weight 20%
Review of Technical Quality of Proposal	This factor considers the scientific merit of the proposed approach and the probability of achieving positive results within the designated period.

Criterion 4 **Maximum Points:** 0

Competence and Past Performance	Weight 20%
Review of Competence and Recent Research Performance of PI, co-Is, and/or Research	This factor considers the scientific and technical competence and recent research of the PI and team and the promptness with which the research results were disseminated to the scientific community from previous funding. This factor includes performance records

Team	and capability to provide the necessary facilities and support that will ensure satisfactory completion of the proposed work. This factor includes the timely publication of project results and data in peer-reviewed scientific and technical journals, the impact of the results, and whether reporting requirements from previous USGS awards have been satisfied.

Criterion 5 **Maximum Points:** 0

Approriateness and Reasonableness of the Budget	Weight 20%
Review of Proposal Budget	This factor considers whether the proposed budget is commensurate with the level of effort needed to accomplish the project objectives and whether the cost of the project is reasonable relative to the value of the anticipated results.

E2. Review and Selection Process

A. Proposals pertinent to one of the ten research areas will be evaluated by multi-disciplinary peer review panels. The panel members read all the proposals assigned to their panel prior to their meeting and at the panel meeting discuss each proposal according to the evaluation criteria. The four to seven panel members are scientists and engineers drawn from academia, Federal, State, local, and regional agencies, non-profit organizations, and private industry. In addition, one USGS member is often chosen for each panel. The panels will evaluate the technical merit of the proposals especially in the context of development of an integrated program of investigations for that region with attention to the research priorities (see Attachment A).

B. The peer review panel makes recommendations and provides advice on each proposal based on the criteria in section E.1. The panel ranks proposals into priority groupings based on their scores in accordance with the criteria. The panel rankings are the principal determination of proposal success pending available funds; the Earthquake Hazards Program Office makes final funding decisions based on the panel's recommendations and the EHP Science Priorities for the Fiscal Year. The results of the peer review will assist the USGS in making final award determinations under this Announcement. The panels include five regional panels, and five topical panels for earthquake hazards, impacts and risk, earthquake source processes, earthquake rupture forecasting, ground motion research, and earthquake early warning research. Applicants **must indicate in the Proposal Information Summary (Attachment C)** the panel that is most appropriate for their proposal. Although it is required to indicate the panel when submitting a proposal, **the USGS Regional or Topical coordinator reserves the right to reassign proposals to a more appropriate panel as necessary.**

The panels and their designations are as follows:

Designation	**Panel Name**
CEUS	Central and Eastern United States
EEW	Earthquake Early Warning Research
HIR	Hazards, Impacts, and Risk

ESP	Earthquake Source Processes
ERF	Earthquake Rupture Forecasting
IMW	Inter-mountain West
GM	Ground Motion Research
NC	Northern California
PNA	Pacific Northwest and Alaska
SC	Southern California

Applications can be directed to only <u>ONE</u> panel. If unsure of which panel is most appropriate, contact the applicable Regional or Topical Coordinator (see Attachment A for contact information).

C. All proposals are considered in accordance with the criteria set forth below. All criteria is to be weighed equally by the panel reviewers when deriving their overall score.

1. <u>Relevance and Timeliness</u>. This factor considers the relevance and timeliness of the proposed research activities as they relate to the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program goals and address the Department of Interior's Secretarial priorities, including regional emphasis where appropriate (see Attachment A).
2. <u>Technical Quality of the Proposal</u>. This factor considers the scientific merit of the proposed approach and the probability of achieving positive results within the designated period.
3. <u>Competence and Recent Research Performance of Principal Investigator (PI) and Research Team.</u> This factor considers the scientific and technical competence of the PI and coworkers and promptness of disseminating completed research results to the scientific community. This factor includes performance records and capability of providing required facilities and support needed to assure satisfactory completion of the proposed work. The competence of new applicants or early career scientists should be weighed equally to seasoned applicants or senior level scientists. This factor also includes the timely publication of project results and data in peer-reviewed scientific or technical journals, the impact of the results, and whether reporting requirements from previous USGS awards have been satisfied.
4. <u>Appropriateness and Reasonableness of the Budget</u>. This factor considers whether the proposed budget is commensurate with the level of effort needed to accomplish the project objectives and whether the cost of the project is reasonable relative to the value of the anticipated results. As indicated in the Program Announcement, time commitments from senior PIs and staff should be limited, with a salary focus instead on students and junior level staff. PIs should not be penalized for high institutional overhead costs.
5. <u>Data Management Plan.</u> This is a required plan for every proposal and is to be clearly described in the proposal. The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) requires the USGS to:
   "Ensure that all extramural researchers receiving Federal grants and contracts for scientific research and intramural researchers develop data management plans, as appropriate, describing how they will provide for long-term preservation of, and access to, scientific data in digital formats resulting from federally funded research, or explaining why long term preservation and access cannot be justified."

E3. CFR – Regulatory Information

Refer to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to USGS awards. USGS will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their Notice of Award.

E4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Following the peer panel reviews, the USGS will make funding decisions and will notify applicants of one of three possible decisions: the proposal has been recommended for funding at full or reduced levels of support, subject to appropriations; the proposal is being declined and will not be funded; or the proposal is on hold, and may be funded if sufficient funds become available during the fiscal year in question. The USGS intends to provide initial notifications to the institution and PI by the end of November 2024. For proposals that are placed on hold, secondary notification regarding funding will be provided on or before the following February or when appropriations are known.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F1. Federal Award Notices

Rejection of Applications after Initial Review:

If an application does not meet all requirements specified in the Announcement, as determined by the Contracting Officer in consultation with the External Research Coordinator, the institution and Principal Investigator will be promptly notified that the proposal will not be reviewed indicating the reason for its rejection.

F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See the "DOI Standard Terms and Conditions" for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to DOI awards.

Refer to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to USGS awards. The USGS will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their Notice of Award.

Data Availability

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.315:

(a) All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.

(b) The Federal Government has the right to:

(1) Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and

(2) Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

F3. Reporting

Financial Reports

All recipients must use the SF-425, Federal Financial Report form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

See Attachment E, 2025 EHP Award Terms and Conditions, for more details on financial reporting requirements.

Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

See Attachment E, 2025 EHP Award Terms and Conditions, for more details on Progress Report and Final Technical Report requirements.

Significant Development Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify USGS in writing of any

favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures
Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the U.S. Office of Government Ethics website for more information on these restrictions. USGS will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, USGS will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies USGS may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of the award.

Other Mandatory Disclosures
The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance
If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds $10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management (SAM) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in accordance with Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200.

See Attachment E, 2025 EHP Award Terms and Conditions, for additional information on Recipient Reporting and Disclosure requirements.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

G1. Program Technical Contact

For **programmatic technical assistance**, contact:

First Name:
Jill
Last Name:
Franks
Address:
USGS National Center, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20192
Telephone:
571-294-1718 (cell)
Email:

jfranks@usgs.gov
For External Research support issues, contact Jill Franks, Associate Program Coordinator for Earthquake Hazards External Research.

G2. Program Administration Contact

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First Name:
Margaret
Last Name:
Eastman
Address:
USGS National Center, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20192
Telephone:
703-283-9642 (cell)
Email:
mrussell@usgs.gov
For Contracting Officer issues, contact Maggie Eastman, Office of Acquisition and Grants.

G3. Application System Technical Support

For **Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages**, contact:

Name:
Grants.gov Customer Support
Telephone:
1-800-518-4726
Email:
Support@grants.gov

H. Other Information

Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the USGS program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

Payment to Foreign Recipients:

The Department of the Interior requires all payments under financial assistance awards be made using the Department of the Treasury Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system. HOWEVER, ASAP cannot make payments to foreign recipients. As such, payment to foreign recipients will be made by Treasury Check in U.S. funds upon receipt of properly prepared SF-270, "Request for Advance or Reimbursement". Requests should be submitted on quarterly basis. Payments may be drawn in advance only as needed to meet immediate cash disbursement needs. Foreign recipients are further advised that, although ASAP cannot handle foreign recipients, a waiver from use of ASAP **is** required. This waiver is processed by the USGS and no award may be issued until such time as the waiver is approved.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

OMB Control Number: 1028-0051, Expiration Date: July 31, 2025

We are collecting this information in accordance with the program identified above. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. Public report burden for this collection is estimated to average 45 hours per grant application and 12 hours to prepare a final technical report. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program- specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Bureau Clearance Officer, U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS807, Reston VA 20192.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT: The Paperwork Reduction Act says that the agency must tell you why we are collecting this information, how we will use it, and whether you have to give it to us. This information is being collected to determine the eligibility of the applicant and as a basis for approval or disapproval of the proposed research. The purpose of the program is to support research in earthquake hazards and earthquake prediction to provide earth science data and information essential to mitigate earthquake losses. Response to this request is required to obtain and retain a grant, under the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977, Public Law 95 -124. Public report burden for this collection is estimated to average 45 hours per grant application and 12 hours to prepare a final technical report. The OMB Control Number is

1028-0051 for this information collection; the expiration date is July 31, 2025. Direct comments regarding this collection of information may be sent to the Bureau Clearance Officer, U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS807, Reston VA 20192.

Synopsis

G25AS00240

USGS Earthquake Hazards Program External Research Support Announcement for Fiscal Year 2025

General Information

Summary

Opportunity Category
D (Discretionary)

Opportunity Category Explanation

CFDA
15.807

Funding Instrument Type
G - Grant

Funding Activity Category
ST (Science and Technology and Other Research and Developmenet

Funding Activity Category Explanation

Award Information

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement
No

Percentage of Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

Expected Number of Awards
60

Estimated Total Program Funding
$5,000,000

Estimated Award Ceiling
$0

Estimated Award Floor
$0

Project Period | Expected Duration in Months
24

Key Dates

Estimated Post Date
03/19/2024

Application Due Date
05/23/2024

Application Due Date Explanation
Electronically submitted applications must be submitted via grants.gov no later than 6:00 p.m., EDT, on the listed application due date.

Estimated Award Date
January 01, 2025

Estimated Project Start Date
01/01/2025

Estimated Project End Date
12/31/2025

Archive Date

Eligibility Information

Eligibility Category
25 – Others (see text field entitled “Additional Information on Eligibility” for clarification)
99 – Unrestricted (i.e. open to any type of entity above), subject to any clarification in the text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility"

Additional Information on Eligibility (Grants.gov 4,000/GMM 2,500 character limit)
This Announcement is open to all individuals and entities EXCEPT for the ineligible categories listed below.

The following proposals are **NOT** eligible for consideration under this Announcement:

A. Proposals for regional seismic monitoring or establishing Data Centers.
B. Proposals for long-term operation of geodetic networks or instruments.
C. Proposals from U.S. Government agencies or U.S. Government employees.
D. Proposals from Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC).
E. Proposals in which there is a real or apparent conflict of interest.
F. Proposals principally involving the direct procurement of a product, equipment, or service.
G. Proposals having subcontracts for 50 percent or greater of total direct costs.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. 6301–6308), the United States Geological Survey is authorized to continue existing, and on and after November 10, 2003, to enter into new cooperative agreements directed towards a particular cooperator, in support of joint research and data collection activities with Federal,State, and academic partners funded by appropriations herein, including those that provide for space in cooperator facilities.

Additional Information

Description (Grants.gov/Forecast) (18,000 character limit)
The USGS Earthquake Hazards Program (EHP) issues this annual Announcement for assistance to support research in earthquake hazards, the physics of earthquakes, earthquake occurrence, and earthquake safety policy and address the Department of Interior’s Secretarial priorities. This activity is authorized by the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-124, 42

U.S.C. 7701 et. seq.), and as amended by the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-307).

Awarding Officer Contact Name

Margaret Eastman

Awarding Officer Contact Phone

703-283-9642 (cell)

Awarding Officer Email Address

mrussell@usgs.gov

Awarding Officer Email Description

mrussell@usgs.gov

Link to Additional Information

https://www.usgs.gov/programs/earthquake-hazards/science/external-grants-overview