OVERVIEW SECTION

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: "Development and Management of the National Small Business Ombudsman/Small Business Environmental Assistance Provider 507 Program Website"

ACTION: Request for Proposals (RFP) – Initial Announcement

RFP NO: EPA-OA-OSBP-15-01

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO.: 66.034

DATES: The closing date and time for receipt of proposals is January 21, 2015, 4:00 p.m. EST. Proposals submitted through http://www.Grants.gov must be received by January 21, 2015, 4:00 p.m. EST. Proposals submitted in hard copy, as described in *Section 4(C)* of this announcement, must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service by January 21, 2015, or received in the EPA program office via hand delivery or express mail by January 21, 2015, 4:00 pm EST to receive consideration. Because of the unique situation involving U.S. mail screening, EPA highly recommends that applicants submitting a proposal in hard copy use a courier service or express mail option to transmit their proposal.

To allow for efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests submittal of an informal notice of 'Intent to Apply' by December 22, 2014 to hoag.paula@epa.gov. Submissions of Intent to Apply is optional; it is a process management tool that will allow EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted proposals.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits proposals from eligible entities that can provide web/IT development, support and website content management to support participation by nonfederal partners (i.e. states, trade associations and small businesses) in the nation-wide Small Business Ombudsman (SBO)/Small Business Environmental Assistance Providers (SBEAP) 507 Program authorized by section 507 of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments.

In 1996 EPA established a website for the 507 Program in response to requests for a better way to communicate among the state SBEAPs and the small business community. The state compliance assistance programs called for technical assistance in centrally communicating, distributing and exchanging information on compliance assistance and on their program activities, as well as in locating environmental compliance and sustainability information focused on small business. State SBEAPs, trade associations whose members are predominantly small businesses, other technical assistance organizations, and small businesses have come to rely on this webpage for up to date environmental compliance and sustainability information focused on small business. Funding under this announcement will be used for activities that support this nation-wide program and website for all state and U.S. territories. The goal of this cooperative agreement is to provide state SBO and SBEAP staff, as well as the small business community that are required to comply with environmental regulations, with training and studies through a centralized virtual location to share information, resources, content and activities, which help this nation-wide program stay connected and provide well rounded environmental compliance assistance to the small business community and overall public.

FUNDING/AWARDS: The total estimated funding available under this competitive funding opportunity is approximately $500,000, subject to the availability of funds, quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. *(Refer to Section 2(A).)*

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Section 1 - Funding Opportunity Description.

A. Background.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP), Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman (ASBO) is seeking proposals from eligible entities to develop a strategy in maintenance of a Small Business Environmental website and associated small business environmental assistance activities.

Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs) were created as a result of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, Section 507 requirement that all States develop a program to assist small businesses in meeting the requirements of the Act. The Program consists of three components: 1) Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP); 2) Small Business Ombudsman (SBO); and 3) Compliance Advisory Panel (CAP). Since 1990, most of these programs have expanded to provide assistance in all areas, including water and waste issues. SBEAPs provide free, non-regulatory environmental compliance, and sustainability assistance to small businesses. In a climate which is increasing in environmental regulatory burdens and enforcement, while at the same time is dwindling in compliance assistance, the 507 Program website is essential to continue in helping the 507 program members with their goal in meeting the evolving needs of the small business assistance providers and the small businesses community throughout the country which are required to comply with environmental regulations.

B. Program Funding History and Results

The 507 Program website has, since its inception, been funded by the EPA, most recently under a financial contract with a private company. The contractor managed the website's daily updating and management needs, and assisted at the annual national conferences while providing general communication support for the program. In 2013 the most recent contract terms expired, and EPA o managed the website in-house for a transitional period. EPA has now decided that a cooperative agreement would be the most appropriate vehicle to fund this project because the main purpose of the website is to continue helping nonfederal partners in the 507 program such as state SBO/SBEAPs, as well as the small business community and general overall public in obtaining environmental compliance assistance information.

C. Assistance Activities

This solicitation seeks eligible entities to submit proposals to support the development and

management of the National 507 Program Website. Applications are to focus on the 507 Program priorities based on the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment's section 507 language (http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t5/memoranda/smbus.pdf) and clearly describe the development and implementation of the 507 program for the benefit of the program's nonfederal partners including the website's necessary training tools and services, reusable by other partners, or the development and implementation of technologies and services directly related to 507 program activities.

D. Program Priorities

The 507 Program Website is a necessary source of information sharing and collaboration of the individual state programs that are spread throughout the country. The purpose of this website is to benefit the individual state SBO, SBEAP and CAP members (that make up the 507 program), the small business community that are provided the compliance assistance support by the 507 Program and the public that will benefit in reduced pollution and increased safety from their local small businesses that are more compliant with environmental regulations.

The 507 Program Website keeps the state small business assistance providers and the small businesses community throughout the country up to date on environmental and small business issues that pertain to environmental compliance assistance. This can be met by:

1. Working with 507 Program Members

Applicants should describe their strategy to best work with and manage the ongoing activities with state 507 Small Business Ombudsmen (SBOs), state 507 Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs), and 507 Compliance Assistance Coordinators (CAPs), as well as other potential small business environmental assistance providers as needed, which support the goals of the 507 program.

2. Developing and maintaining the 507 Program Website

Applicants should describe their strategy to best organize and maintain the relevant 507 Program content, tools and resources which help keep state SBO, SBEAP, and CAP staff well trained and with access to current, relevant research and studies. **Hosting of Web Site**

Applicants should describe how they plan to host the internet server for the 507 Program Website with the familiar and already purchased web address of http://www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org/. EPA will provide the successful applicant with use of this web address as a form of in-kind assistance.

3. Providing Support for 507 Annual Conference and Outreach

Applicants should outline a strategy in how the 507 Program Website will provide support and outreach to potential participants and attendees attending the annual 507 Program Training Conference.

E. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage.

Proposals under this Solicitation must clearly demonstrate support of the EPA 2011-2015 Strategic. The projects selected for award through this competition will support progress towards EPA Strategic Plan Goal 1 (Addressing Climate Change and Improving Air Quality), and Goal 5 (Protecting Human Health and the Environment by Enforcing Laws and Assuring Compliance) as this cooperative agreement's statutory authority stems from the Clean Air Act, under the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment's 507 program to help address clean air and compliance assurance/assistance.

View EPA's strategic plan at http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan

F. Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs.

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7 *"Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,"* EPA requires that all grant recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature and in how they are measured. Applicants must discuss environmental outputs and outcomes in their proposed workplan.

1. ***Outcomes*:** The term "outcome" refers to the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature, must be quantitative, and may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

   EPA anticipates outcomes from projects expected to be awarded under this announcement will include but are not limited to the following:

   a. For working/collaborating with the SBO/SBEAP's 507 Program –better air quality conditions and reduced waste due to the small business community better able to comply with EPA regulations
   b. For the development of the 507 507 Program Website–the reduction of air toxins due to the increased awareness of air quality regulations.

2. ***Outputs:*** The term "output" refers to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work products related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

   EPA anticipates the outputs from the projects expected to be awarded under this announcement will include but are not limited to the following:

   a. For working/collaborating with the SBO/SBEAP's 507 Program – increased levels and quality of environmental compliance assistance through training and access to current, relevant studies for small businesses that are required to comply with US Environmental Protection Agency laws and regulations.
   b. For the development of the 507 Program Website– increased program

capacity t and cohesiveness among the compliance assistance providers nationwide through training and access to current, relevant studies, ensuring better outreach and assistance for the small business community in complying with environmental laws and regulations.

G. Supplementary Information.

The statutory authority for this action is the Clean Air Act, §103(b)(3), which authorizes the award of grants for research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, and studies related to the causes, effects, (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, and control of air pollution. The 507 Program National Website helps states, territories, universities, small businesses and EPA share environmental compliance assistance information more efficiently and effectively over the Internet. The general public also benefits from the 507 Program National Website in pollution prevention because small businesses are more effectively complying with EPA regulations due to increased and successful outreach assistance from the website.

Section 2 - Award Information.

A. What is the amount of available funding?

The total estimated funding available under this competitive opportunity is approximately $500,000

B. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates award of up to approximately one (1) cooperative agreement under this announcement, ranging in value from approximately $50,000 to $100,000, subject to the availability of funds, quality of evaluated proposals, and other applicable considerations. Funds will be awarded incrementally over a five-year period, with the first year funding estimated at approximately $100,000, subject to availability of funds. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of original selection decision.

C. Funding Type

The funding for this project will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for this project will include:

1. Close monitoring of recipient's performance to verify the results proposed;
2. Collaboration during performance of the scope of work;

3. Review of any proposed changes to work plan and/or budget;
4. Review of proposed procurements in accordance with 40 CFR 30.44(e) and 40 CFR 31.36(g);
5. Approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or grantees employed by the award recipient);
6. Review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient); and
7. Review and concurrence on project outputs for consistency with the EPA approved scope of work.

D. Will proposals be partially funded?

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

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement or, to make fewer awards than anticipated.

E. What is the project period for award(s) resulting from this solicitation?

The project period for awards resulting from this announcement is estimated to begin in Spring 2015. Proposed project periods may be up to five years.

Section 3 - Eligibility Information.

A. **Eligible Entities.**
Under this solicitation EPA has limited eligible applicants to State air pollution control agencies or the state-specified entity (typically a state college or university) under the direction of a State air pollution control agency and approved by EPA in accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of Section 507 of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (Guidelines found here: http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t5/memoranda/smbus.pdf). Additionally, a state specified entity must be eligible for funding under section 103 of the Clean Air Act and CFDA 66.034. The other eligible entities identified in CFDA 66.034 are not eligible.

B. **Cost Sharing or Matching.**
No matching funds are required under this competition. Although cost-sharing/matching is not required as a condition of eligibility under this competition, under Section V of this announcement EPA will evaluate applications based on a leveraging criterion. Leveraging is generally when an applicant proposes to provide its own additional funds/resources or those from third party sources to support or complement the project they are awarded under the competition which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds awarded. Any leveraged funds/resources, and their source, must be identified in the application (See Section IV of the announcement).

Leveraged funds and resources may take various forms as noted below.

Voluntary cost share is a form of leveraging. Voluntary cost sharing is when an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project when a cost share is not required. Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share **must** include the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost share in the project budget on the SF-424. If an applicant proposes a voluntary cost share, the following apply:

- A voluntary cost share is subject to the match provisions in the grant regulations (40 CFR 30.23 or40 CFR 31.24, as applicable).
- A voluntary cost share may only be met with eligible and allowable costs.
- The recipient may not use other sources of federal funds to meet a voluntary cost share unless the statute authorizing the other federal funding provides that the federal funds may be used to meet a cost share requirement on a federal grant.
- The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget. If the proposed voluntary cost share does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31 as applicable.

Other leveraged funding/resources that are not identified as a voluntary cost share - this form of leveraging may be met by funding from another federal grant, from an applicant's own resources, or resources from other third party sources. This form of leveraging should not be included in the budget and the costs need not be eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement. While this form of leveraging should not be included in the budget, the grant workplan should include a statement indicating that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's proposal. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their proposals. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31 as applicable.

C. **Threshold Eligibility Criteria.**
These are requirements that, if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals from eligible entities (see *Section 3*.A above) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section 5 of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. a. Proposals must **substantially comply** with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in *Section 4* of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit and format are

expressed in *Section 4* with respect to the narrative proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. (See *Section 4* for specific details)

b. Proposals submitted through http://www.Grants.gov must be received by January 21, 2015, 4:00 p.m. EST. Proposals submitted in hard copy, as described in *Section 4(B)* of this announcement, must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service by January 21, 2015 or received in the EPA Program Office via hand delivery or express mail by January 21, 2015, 4:00 p.m. EST to receive consideration. Proposals received or postmarked. Proposals must be postmarked, or electronically submitted via www.grants.gov on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section 4 of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal is submitted to the designated person/office specified in *Section 4* of the announcement by the submission deadline.

c. Proposals postmarked or electronically submitted via Grants.gov after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with www.grants.gov. Where *Section 4(B)* requires proposal and postmark/submission to a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom alone is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with the Agency contact listed in *Section 7, Paula Hoag,* as soon as possible after the submission deadline; failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

2. Hard copy proposals will only be accepted via an express delivery service. EPA will not accept proposals submitted via fax or standard 1st Class Mail delivery by the U.S. Postal Service.

3. All proposal materials must be submitted in English.

4. .The total funding requested may not exceed $500,000.

5.. Ineligible activities: If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

Section 4 - Proposal and Submission Information.

A. How to Obtain an Application Package.

Applicants may download individual grant application forms, or electronically request a paper

proposal package and an accompanying computer CD of information related to applicants/grant recipients roles and responsibilities from EPA's Grants and Debarment website by visiting: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how-to-apply.htm.

B. Content and Proposal Submission.

The following documents are required for all proposal packages, irrespective of the mode of submission. All packages must contain a "Narrative Proposal," one completed and signed Standard Form 424 (SF 424), "Application for Federal Assistance," and a budget narrative. The Narrative Proposal, a maximum of 17 single-spaced pages in length, must explicitly describe the applicant's proposed project and specifically address each of the evaluation criteria disclosed in *Section 5(A), Evaluation Criteria,* and the threshold eligibility criteria in *Section 3(C).*

1. **Standard Form 424 (SF-424), Application for Federal Assistance, with original signature and Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information**

   Complete the forms found here: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of the indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be included on line 22.

2. Narrative Proposal.

Narrative Proposals must be concise, well organized, and not exceed 17 typed, single-line spaced, 8 1/2 x 11" pages. The Narrative Proposal must provide the information detailed in this section, **including responses to all *Section 3(C), Threshold Criteria, and Section 5(A), Evaluation Criteria,* identified in this announcement.** Factual information about your proposed project must be provided. Do not include discussions of broad principles that are not specific to the proposed work or project covered by your proposal. **Responses to evaluation criteria should include the criteria number and title but need not restate the entire text of the criteria.** Sufficient detail must be provided to allow for an evaluation of the merits of the proposal. Vague descriptions, redundancy, and failure to address the selection criteria will result in a lower ranking.

The Narrative Proposal must substantially conform to the following outline and content:

a. **Cover Letter**. The cover letter must include a brief description of your project, be written on your organization's official letterhead, and signed by an official with the authority to commit your organization to the proposed project. The cover letter must also include:

   i. Project Title: Indicate that the proposal package is for the Development and Management of the National Small Business Ombudsman/Small Business Environmental

ii. Applicant Information: Provide the name and full address of the organization applying for funds. This is the agency or organization that will be receiving the grant and will be accountable to the EPA.

iii. Contacts: Provide phone/fax numbers, e-mail address, and mailing address of the Project Manager and head of organization/Executive Director responsible for the project application. These individuals may be contacted if other information is needed.

iv. Cooperative Partners: Provide names and phone numbers of individuals and organizations that have agreed to participate in the implementation of the project, if any.

v. Funding Requested: Specify the total amount you are requesting from EPA. The total funding requested amount may not exceed $500,000 for the life of the 5 year cooperative agreement.

b. **Detailed Project Description.** The project description should provide the information requested below on how the applicant will implement and conduct its operation and discuss how the proposal addresses each of the evaluation criteria in *Section 5* of this announcement.

The detailed project description must substantially conform to the following outline and content:

i. **Project Description.** Provide a description of how you will implement and conduct the proposed project activities for developing and managing the 507 small business environmental home page, as referenced in *Section 1(D), Project Priorities*, and program objectives. The description should demonstrate consideration of the activities that will be conducted to accomplish objectives of the project. The project description should include: (1) the reason your proposal should receive funding support, including experience with and knowledge of the CAA 507 program; (2) the estimated timeline or schedule of expected target dates and milestones to achieve specific program priorities and accomplishments during the budget and project period; and (3) necessary program priorities and activities that will be conducted to accomplish the objectives. The program priorities and activities should be realistic and achievable within the budget and project period of the grant.

ii. **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

If applicable, submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your

organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

iv. **Anticipated Outcomes and Performance Measurement.** Specify the expected environmental outcomes as described in *Section 1(F),* of this announcement. Discuss how you propose to track and measure your progress in achieving the expected project outcomes and results.

v. **Anticipated Outputs.** Identify the expected project outputs, including those described in *Section 1(F), Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs* of this announcement and how you will track and measure your progress in achieving the expected project outputs. Outputs, quantitative or qualitative, must be measurable during the project performance period.

vi. **Voluntary cost share/match and other leveraged funds (See Section 3. B also)**

Demonstrate how you will leverage additional funds/resources beyond the grant funds awarded to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Describe the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how you will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged resources will play to support the proposed project activities. Selected applicants are expected to abide by their proposed leveraging commitments during grant performance and the failure to do so may affect the legitimacy of the award.

3. **Attachments**. The following three documents should be included as attachments to the work plan. These documents will not count as part of the 17-page limit and do not have an individual page limitation. Please provide a list of all attachments to the proposal.

   a. **Budget/Resources.** Include a detailed budget narrative which clearly explains how funds will be used for each of the following categories. For each major program priorities, indicate what portion of the cost EPA grant funds will be used and, what portion the applicant or other partners will fund. Ensure that your budget narrative addresses the *"Budget/Resources"* and *"Leveraging"* evaluation criteria listed in *Section 5* of this solicitation.

      1. Personnel
      2. Fringe Benefits
      3. Cooperative Agreement Costs
      4. Travel
      5. Supplies
      6. Other Costs (Be specific.)
      7. Non-EPA Project Funding. Applicants should identify funding from other sources including any in-kind resources.
      8. Total Project Costs (including EPA and Non-EPA Funds.) Costs proposed in the budget must be linked directly to the proposal.

      Following is a suggested format to summarize your proposed budget. Applicants are not limited to three Project Activities. Please expand (add more columns), as necessary, to include Activities listed in *Section 1(B)* of this announcement.

Sample Table

Budget Categories (Required Field)	**Project Activities**			**TOTAL (Required Field)**
	Activity 1: *(fill in)*	**Activity 2***:* *(fill in)*	**Activity 3***:* *(fill in)*	
a. Personnel				
b. Fringe Benefits				
c. Travel				
d. Supplies				
e. Cooperative Agreement				
f. Other				
g. Administrative				
h. Total Direct				
i. Indirect Costs				
j. Total Project Cost				

k. Non-EPA Funding		13		

***Management Fees*:** When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

b. **Milestones.** Schedule indicating start times and completion dates of significant program priorities under your program.

c. **Letters of Support.** The applicant should provide names and phone numbers of persons to contact at these organizations along with what assistance or role they played with your organization/project.

C. Partnerships, Contracts and Subawards:

a. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships , provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant

regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133 , and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

b. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in SectionV of the announcement?

Section 6A of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

(i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.
(ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

D. Submitting a Proposal Package.

Applicants may choose to submit proposals either in hard copy (paper) format or electronically through www.grants.gov with an electronic signature. Proposal submission instructions for both methods are detailed below. Please select one method. The closing date and time for applicants

to submit proposals under this announcement is January 21, 2015 4:00 P.M. EST. Proposals submitted in hard-copy, as described below, must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service by January 21, 2015 or received by the EPA contact listed in Section 7(A), Agency Contact, by January 21, 2015, 4:00 p.m. EST to receive consideration. Proposals will not be accepted via fax, email or standard 1st class mail delivery by the U.S. Postal Service.

1. **Hard copy (paper) submission.** Submit a complete proposal including all of the documents identified in *Section 4(B)* of this announcement. **The complete proposal package must be sent through express mail, or courier service (FedEx, UPS, DHL, USPS, etc.) to the EPA contact listed in *Section 7(A), Agency Contact*.** Paper submission must include one original signature document and two copies of the completed Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), the Narrative Proposal, and all Attachments. Please also include a CD-disk with electronic copies of all the documents, if possible.

2. **Electronic Submission**

Your organization's authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov) no later than **January 21, 2015.** Please see Appendix A for complete instruction on submitting your proposal through Grants.gov.

Proposal materials submitted through http://www.Grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from support@grant.gov) within 5 days of the proposal deadline, please email Paula Hoag at hoag.paula@epa.gov Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

E. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and sub awards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

Section 5 - Proposal Review Information.

A. Evaluation Criteria.

Only eligible entities whose proposals meet the threshold eligibility criteria in Section 3 of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion set forth below. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal package submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

Criteria	**Maximum Points per Criterion**
Project Description: Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent to which the proposal effectively addresses the Program Priority activities described in Section 1(D) of this announcement. This includes: • The extent to which the "Proposal Narrative" clearly, concisely and realistically provides a description of the proposed 507 Program compliance/prevention project goals, activities, budget, and project milestones. (20 points) • The extent to which the proposed project activities will contribute to overall 507 Program compliance assistance program implementation for states 507 Program and small businesses. (20 points) • The extent to which the proposed project will lead to improved compliance assistance, collaboration, communication, and assistance for states and small business. (10 points)	50
Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their: **(i)** **(5pts)** past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the narrative proposal as described in Section IV.C of the announcement; **(ii)** **(5 pts)** history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the narrative proposal as described in Section IV.C of the announcement including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not; **(iii)** **(5 pts)** organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project; **(iv)** **(5 pts)** staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. **Note:** In evaluating applicants under items i and ii of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a	20

neutral score for these sub-factors (items i and ii above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.	
Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls are in place for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.	5
Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures Extent to which the "Narrative Proposal" realistically describes how the project will lead to measurable environmental results. The proposal should: • Clearly specify anticipated environmental outcomes and outputs as described in *Section 1(F), Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs*. **(4 points**) • Clearly describe the measures of success for the project. Measure of success should be either measures of environmental improvement or should be directly linked to such measures. EPA will look for quantitative and qualitative measurability. (**3 points**) • Describe how success in achieving project results (including the outcomes and outputs identified) will be evaluated and measured. **(3 points**)	10
Budget: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the proposed project budget to determine whether, **(i)** **(5 pts)** costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes, **(ii)** **(5 pts)** the proposed budget provides a detailed breakout of the approximate funding used for each major activity and clearly itemizes individual tasks, activities, etc. • An applicant's budget and budget narrative must account for both federal funds and any non-federal funds (e.g., any required or voluntary cost share/match if applicable). Applicants must precisely describe in their budget narrative how they will account for any required or voluntary cost share/match and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.	10
Leveraging: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate that they will leverage additional funds/ resources, beyond the grant funds awarded, to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how they will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds/resources will play to support the proposed project activities.	5

Applicants will receive a **neutral score of 3pts** if no leveraging is included in the proposal	

B. Review and Selection Process.

Proposals will first be evaluated against the threshold eligibility criteria listed in Section 3. Only those proposals which meet all of the threshold eligibility criteria under Section 3 will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed under Section 5 by an EPA evaluation team. Each proposal will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered according to the numerical score. EPA staff will evaluate each proposal based on the evaluation criteria described above in Section 5 ,and provide preliminary funding recommendations to the Selection Official.

C. Other Factors

Final funding decisions will be made by the Selection Official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendations of the EPA evaluation team. In making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official may also consider programmatic priorities and geographic diversity of funds. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA Award Official.

Section 6 - Award Administration Information.

A. Award Notices.

EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by March 1, 2015. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal or the project contact listed in the proposal. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by GIAMD .Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

1. A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm

2. **Intergovernmental Review**
   This funding opportunity is subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Final applicants must contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372.

   Please note that Intergovernmental Review does not apply to New York City
   http://www.epa.gov/region2/grants/pdfs/nys_intergov_review.pdf

3. Grants and cooperative agreements with governmental organizations are subject to 40 CFR Part 31 and OMB Circular A-87 (2 CFR Part 225). If the award is made to a university, that applicable regulations would be 40 CFR Part 30 and 2 CFR Part 220 unless the award is made after 12/26/14 such that the OMB Omni Circular would apply.

4. Programmatic terms and conditions will be negotiated with the selected recipient.

C. Reporting Requirement.

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. The quarterly progress reports will be submitted to the EPA Project Officer within thirty days after each reporting period. These reports will cover work status, work progress, difficulties encountered, preliminary data results and a statement of activity anticipated during the subsequent reporting period. A discussion of expenditures along with a comparison of the percentage of the project completed to the project schedule and an explanation of significant discrepancies will be included in the report. The report will also include any changes of key personnel concerned with the project.

The final report will address goals and objectives, performance measurements, lessons learned, any other resources leveraged during the project and how they were used, and any plans to continue the project after the expiration of the grant/cooperative agreement and associated sources of funding. The final report will be submitted to the EPA Project Officer at the close of the grant.

D. Disputes.

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Paula Hoag at hoag.paula@epa.gov

E. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and

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

Section 7 - Agency Contact.

A. CONTACT INFORMATION & ADDRESS

Paula Hoag, U.S. EPA, Office of Small Business Programs (1230A), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460; Phone 202-566-2496; or email hoag.paula@epa.gov.

B. FOR EXPRESS MAIL/COURIER DELIVERY:

Paula Hoag, U.S. EPA, Office of Small Business Programs, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Room 6440R WJC North, Washington, DC 20004

Section 8 - Other Information.

The applicant selected for award will be required to submit a final application package to the EPA. This package will include an EPA-approved final work plan that describes the work to be performed, a final budget, and the required certification forms. Questions received from applicants and EPA's responses will be posted online at http://www.epa.gov/asbo

For additional information on how to apply for, manage, and complete an EPA grant, please visit: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/training/resources_for_communities/epa_grants_101.htm

APPENDIX A - Grants.gov Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your proposal must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to http://www.grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then go to the "Get Registered" link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more.

Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to http://www.grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then "Apply for Grants" from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html

You may also be able to access the application (proposal) package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on http://www.grants.gov. Go to http://www.grants.gov and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OA-OSBP-15-01or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.034), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on http://www.grants.gov. To find the synopsis page, go to http://www.grants.gov and click "Browse Agencies" in the middle of the page and then go to "Environmental Protection Agency" to find the EPA funding opportunities.

Proposal Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete proposal package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov) no later than January 21, 2015. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.
Please submit *all* of the proposal materials described below using the grants.gov application (proposal) package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the "Show Instructions" tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Proposal Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

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

Optional Documents:

4.Other Attachments form – Budget Narrative

5. Other Attachments form - Milestones
6. Other Attachments form – Support Letters

If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp or contact the EPA Contact listed under Section 7, Agency Contact, Paula Hoag on 202-566-2496.

Proposals submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 5 days of the proposal deadline, please contact Paula Hoag, at (202) 566-2496. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.