OVERVIEW

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 3

TITLE: Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2023 Request for Applications for: **Methodologies and Tools to support Climate-Resilience Communities, Training Modules, and Modeling to Estimate the Impact of Future Hydrology on Urban Best Management Practices**

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA)

RFA #: EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-15

ASSISTANCE LISTING #: 66.466

IMPORTANT DATES

August 8, 2023	Issuance of Request for Applications (RFA)
September 22, 2023	Application submission deadline (see Section IV for more information)
November 1, 2023	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
November 14, 2023	Approximate date for selected applicant to submit revised federal cooperative agreement application
January 1, 2024	Approximate date of award/Project start date

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

1. About the Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 117, 33 USC Section 1267, the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) is responsible for supporting the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council (Executive Council) through the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. CWA Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

The CBP is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. Today, the CBP partners include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission (a tri-state legislative body); and EPA, representing the federal government. The partnership's work is guided by the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, which establishes the plan for collaboration across the Bay's political boundaries and establishes goals and outcomes for the restoration of the Bay, its tributaries, and the lands that surround them.

The CBP was bolstered by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, allowing for increased investment in traditional, nature-based, and green infrastructure. The CBP is committed to increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in its grant programs, projects, and associated community engagement efforts.

2. Background on Partnership Structure

The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the **Executive Council** establishes the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and exerts its leadership to rally public support for the Bay effort and signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay restoration.

The **Principals' Staff Committee (PSC)** works on behalf of the Executive Council to translate the restoration vision into policy and implementation actions. In addition, the PSC acts as the senior policy advisors to the Executive Council, accepting items for their consideration and approval and setting agendas for Executive Council meetings. The PSC also provides policy and program direction to the Management Board.

The **Management Board (MB)** provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the CBP. It directs and coordinates the Goal Implementation Teams and workgroups under it.

Pursuant to CWA Section 117(b)(2), 33 USC Section 1267(b)(2), the **Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO)** is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the Executive Council in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. The CBPO and CBP are two distinct entities.

The committees, teams, and workgroups that will be supported by the activities of this RFA include:

- The **Urban Stormwater Work Group** **(USWG)** has the primary lead on the technical direction for Activities 1-3 as described in Section 1.B. of this RFA. The overarching goals of the USWG are to facilitate the implementation of stormwater controls to achieve the necessary pollutant reduction planning targets as defined under the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL (Bay TMDL); and to support the stormwater initiatives of the Workgroup's state and local members. The USWG formed in 2000 to address all stormwater issues, including nutrient, sediment, and chemical contaminants. By working with local governments, the CBP can encourage the development and implementation of emerging urban stormwater practices to improve their water quantity and quality functions.

  USWG functions include:
  - Supporting the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) on urban and suburban stormwater issues;
  - Providing data and support to CBP stormwater modeling efforts;
  - Reviewing stormwater BMPs;
  - Addressing issues of interest to workgroup participants; and
  - Promoting innovation in the field of stormwater management

- The **Modeling Workgroup** will serve as the technical lead for Activity 4 as described in Section 1.B. of this RFA. The Modeling Workgroup is charged with providing state-of-the-art decision-support modeling tools, which are developed and applied through community and participatory principles, to the CBP Partnership. Modeling Workgroup members are comprised of scientists, engineers, and technical managers from throughout the CBP Partnership. The responsible planning and management of resources to provide the best available decision-support modeling tools requires the Modeling Workgroup members and participants to adhere to the core values of:
  - Integration - Integration of the most recent scientific knowledge in air, watershed, and coastal waters to support ecosystem modeling for restoration decision-making.
  - Innovation - Embracing creativity and encouraging improvement in the development and support of transparent and robust modeling tools.
  - Independence – Making modeling decisions based on the best available evidence and using the most appropriate methods to produce, run, and interpret models, independent of policy considerations.
  - Inclusiveness - Commitment to an open and transparent process and the engagement of relevant partners that results in strengthening the Partnership's decision-making tools.

- The **Climate Resiliency Workgroup** **(CRWG)** and **Local Government Advisory Committee** **(LGAC)** will provide additional guidance.

For additional background information on the CBP achievements and commitments, see the CBP partnership's website at http://www.chesapeakebay.net/.

B. Scope of Work

In 2019, the PSC and the MB directed partners to focus resources on managing best management practices (BMPs) in the Chesapeake watershed in the context of future climate risk. They specifically requested that a long-term multi-agency partnership be formed to examine the vulnerability of BMPs to future climate conditions and to accelerate adoption of stormwater management practices that are appropriately adapted or designed to be resilient in the face of increasing rainfall volumes and intensities expected in the future.

Over the past two years, the USWG, in coordination with the CRWG and other partners, has made significant progress toward these objectives. Through the development of a series of reports and tools that help characterize the risks that climate change poses to stormwater infrastructure, several needs and specific initiatives have emerged as next steps to help local watershed managers effectively address their restoration and public safety functions under future climate conditions.

On October 18-19th, 2021, the USWG, CRWG, and members of the Modeling Workgroup held a two-day joint meeting to review and endorse the prior work products described above and discuss how to build on those findings and advance the implementation of more resilient stormwater practices. Following the meeting, the Chesapeake Stormwater Network (CSN) and CRWG developed a menu of nine potential tools and collected extensive feedback from workgroup members on their priorities.

Activities 1-4 under this RFA reflect the USWG's four recommendations to advance efforts to maintain the resilience of current stormwater BMPs and to advance stormwater management, design, and implementation practices that consider future climate and the intensity, duration, and frequency of precipitation (IDF curves). The agreement awarded under this funding opportunity will include the following Activities:

- Activity 1: Vulnerability Assessment Tool - Develop vulnerability assessment tools, including documentation of methods, that will enable communities to determine which of their residential and commercial areas, municipal assets, or green infrastructure such as ponds or habitats are most vulnerable to future flooding risks and devise strategies to minimize these risks;
- Activity 2: Decision Support Tool - Develop a memorandum that outlines specific processes to improve local capacity to identify and select the most cost-effective risk thresholds to protect specific classes of municipal infrastructure, using the most recent Chesapeake Bay extreme rainfall predictions released in 2021;
- Activity 3: Establish Resilient Design Adaptations – Evaluate commonly used Bay stormwater managment and restoration practices and develop guidance and criteria for design specifications that could be adapted to meet the needs of local Bay communities to improve long-term resilience of BMPs; and
- Activity 4: Modeling to Estimate Impact - Conduct research and modeling analysis, including estimates of uncertainty, and describe the impacts of future hydrology on simulated urban BMPs.

EPA plans to award one five-year cooperative agreement under this RFA. The total estimated funding under this solicitation is approximately **$1,880,000** overall, with an estimated $560,000 available for years 1-3 and $100,000 for years 4-5. [1] The table below details the estimated funding available for each activity throughout the expected five-year project period. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Activity 1: Vulnerability Assessment Tool	$140,000	$140,000	$140,000	$25,000	$25,000	$470,000
Activity 2: Decision Support Tool	$140,000	$140,000	$140,000	$25,000	$25,000	$470,000
Activity 3: Establish Resilient Design Adaptations	$140,000	$140,000	$140,000	$25,000	$25,000	$470,000
Activity 4: Modeling to Estimate Impact	$140,000	$140,000	$140,000	$25,000	$25,000	$470,000
Total	**$560,000**	**$560,000**	**$560,000**	**$100,000**	**$100,000**	**$1,880,000**

If your organization has an interest in and the capacity to accomplish the activities described in this Section and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to apply. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activities are multi-year projects (up to five years), and the application should have a work plan and budget for the first year and a projected work plan and estimated budget detail for each of the subsequent four years.

Applicants must address each Activity below in their application to be considered eligible.

Activity 1: Vulnerability Assessment Tool for Local Communities
Estimated Funding: $140,000 for Years 1-3, $25,000 for Years 4-5

An estimated 40% of U.S. urban flood damage occurs in moderate to low-risk areas outside of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program boundaries. It is important for state and local water resources agencies, hazard mitigation planners, local planning bodies, and other local decision-makers to have tools to identify which residential areas and critical community assets are most at risk from flooding so that residents and businesses can be effectively targeted for outreach regarding their risks, and local investments can be efficiently applied toward design and implementation of the most effective flood control strategies.

This activity will include development of two vulnerability assessment products/tools, including documentation of methods, that will enable communities to determine which of their residential and commercial areas, municipal assets, or green infrastructure such as ponds or habitats are most vulnerable to future flooding risks and devise strategies to minimize these risks. Use and adoption of tools will be supported by outreach, through a series of webcasts, to relevant consumers in flood-prone communities of varying size in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Vulnerability assessment tools should include:

[1] Years 1-3 generally will have a higher budget for focus on developing tools/deliverables, whereas years 4-5 will have a lower budget for focus on wrap-up, final completion, and documentation.

- A technical memorandum/report documenting the most cost-effective methods to analyze subwatershed factors that elevate future flooding risks for neighborhoods and specific municipal/public assets (e.g., ponds, culverts, public buildings).
- A tool to guide local planners and engineers in conducting comprehensive reviews of local codes, ordinances, and development regulations to promote better site design and reduce the vulnerability of current, future, and (re)development projects in the community. The tool may be similar in scope to a Codes and Ordinances Worksheet (COW).

Vulnerability assessment tools should prioritize critical datasets and methods that are adaptable to local conditions and complementary to existing tools. The tools should also emphasize principles of climate justice through analysis to determine the demographic and income characteristics of the at-risk neighborhoods to prioritize equity in community risk-management decisions.

Activity 1 will involve stakeholder engagement activities to improve awareness and understanding of tools and to support use/application/adoption across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This includes hosting a series of online trainings for relevant practitioners (e.g., state/local flood managers, hazard mitigation planners, land use and urban planners, residential community leaders, state/local water and emergency response agencies, etc.). The training, outreach, and technical transfer will be augmented with the development of web-based tools that will supplement the technical memorandum/report.

Within the first two quarters of the initiation of Activity 1 tasks, the recipient will provide a detailed workplan for review by the CBP and EPA Project Officer (PO) describing how the **Vulnerability Assessment Tool for Local Communities** will be developed and how the training, outreach, and technical transfer will be conducted.

Activity 2: Decision Support Tool for Local Resilience
Estimated Funding: $140,000 for Years 1-3, $25,000 for Years 4-5

Local jurisdictions (e.g., counties, municipalities) often have the authority to set engineering standards for infrastructure built in their jurisdiction, consistent with state requirements. They may, for example, control specific standards for storm drains, streets, road crossings, and riparian stream buffers. Although new information on design storms and flood risks under future climate scenarios supports local efforts to identify flood-vulnerable community assets and right-size stormwater infrastructure, many local planners and municipal engineers are unsure of which specific emissions scenarios, storm return intervals, future time horizons, and confidence intervals are most appropriate for each class of municipal assets they are managing.

Furthermore, under local engineering and design regulations, municipal asset classes such as stormwater management practices and stormwater conveyances, often have different design lives, levels of service, public safety risks, life-cycle construction costs, replacement costs, and maintenance regimes. A decision-support tool is needed that would provide communities with guidance on how to choose the specific combination of rainfall depths and design storms for each class to cost-effectively manage risks posed by climate change conditions and future extreme precipitation.

For this activity, the recipient will develop a technical memorandum/report soliciting input from state and local decision-makers and relevant experts that improves local capacity to select the most cost-effective risk thresholds to protect specific classes of municipal infrastructure using the most recent

Chesapeake Bay extreme rainfall predictions released in 2021 (Developing Future Projected Intensity-Duration-Frequency (IDF) Curves technical report). The technical memorandum/report should:

- Evaluate current risk assessment and design thresholds used by stormwater and floodplain managers across the Chesapeake Bay watershed,
- Provide options for using precipitation projections to update resilience thresholds/future design conditions for specific municipal assets,
- Describe the benefits and trade-offs associated with each management option.

Activity 2 will also involve stakeholder engagement activities to improve awareness and understanding of tools and to support use/application/adoption across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This includes hosting a series of online trainings for relevant practitioners (e.g., state/local flood managers, hazard mitigation planners, land use and urban planners, residential community leaders, state/local water and emergency response agencies, etc.). The training, outreach, and technical transfer will be augmented with web-based tools developed to support and enhance the technical memorandum/report.

Within the first two quarters of initiation of Activity 2 tasks, the recipient will provide a detailed workplan for review by the CBP and PO describing how the **Decision Support Tool for Local Resilience** will be developed and how the training, outreach, and technical transfer will be conducted.

The recipient should also evaluate and present options for completing work to generate new climate-informed IDF curves for storms with less than a year return frequency and/or storm event durations less than one hour, and for updating the existing the Projected Intensity-Duration-Frequency (IDF) Curve Data Tool for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and Virginia online tool.

Activity 3: Establish Resilient Design Adaptations for Stormwater Infrastructure and Restoration Practices.
Estimated Funding: $140,000 for Years 1-3, $25,000 for Years 4-5

New guidance is needed to promote longevity of stormwater practices, boost pollutant removal performance, handle increased extreme rainfall, and define more specific maintenance criteria. While the flexibility of local stormwater managers to adopt new local design specifications varies across the Chesapeake Bay watershed, there are opportunities to advance the menu of resilient design adaptations and provide incentives for implementation. Improved “plumbing” techniques can help better manage how water enters stormwater practices and is safely conveyed to waterways. A better understanding of techniques for enhanced runoff reduction, including soil amendments and adaptive control, shows potential for both flood reduction and improved pollutant removal performance. Finally, more guidance is needed on proper construction and maintenance of practices to avoid vulnerabilities that are likely to be exacerbated under climate change conditions.

This activity will include an evaluation of commonly used Bay stormwater managment and restoration practices (such as bioretention, stream restoration, ponds, and Low-Impact Design (LID) practices) and development of guidance and criteria for design specifications that could be adapted to meet the needs of local Bay communities to improve long-term resilience of stormwater BMPs. This element should build on the findings and decision support tool identified in Activity 2.

Activity 3 will involve stakeholder engagement activities to improve awareness and understanding of tools and to support use/application/adoption across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This includes hosting a series of online trainings for relevant practitioners (e.g., state/local flood managers, hazard mitigation planners, land use and urban planners, residential community leaders, state/local water and emergency response agencies, etc.). The training, outreach, and technical transfer will be augmented by web-based tools developed to support and enhance the technical memorandum/report.

Within the first two quarters of initiation of Activity 3 tasks, the recipient will provide a detailed workplan for review by the CBP and PO describing how the **Establish Resilient Design Adaptations for Stormwater Infrastructure and Restoration Practices** will be developed and how the training, outreach, and technical transfer will be conducted.

Activity 4: Modeling to Estimate the Impact of Future Hydrology on Simulated Urban, Agricultural, and Other CBP BMPs to Estimate How Nutrient and Sediment Removal Efficiencies Will Respond, along with the Estimates of Uncertainty.
Estimated Funding: $140,000 for Years 1-3, $25,000 for Years 4-5

There is a need for information and methods to quantify the range of potential impacts on BMP nutrient and sediment removal efficiencies for urban stormwater, agricultural, and other CBP BMPs due to changing future hydrology. Future climate change hydrologies will have increased precipitation volume and intensity resulting in changes to the intensity, duration, and frequency (IDF) of precipitation resulting in differences in CBP BMP performance. To understand how design adaptations, maintenance practices, BMP treatment trains, and site conditions interact with and respond to climate pressures, detailed, small-scale, deterministic modeling with well-founded and documented public domain modes is needed.[2]

This activity will include a detailed technical report documenting the results of research and modeling analysis, including estimates of uncertainty, of the impacts of future hydrology on simulated urban stormwater, agricultural, and other CBP BMPs.

The recipient will run existing, well-documented, open source/public domain stormwater and or watershed models under different future climate hydrologic conditions to determine the relative change in pollutant removal efficiency in existing CBP-approved stormwater management BMPs under the future increased volumes and intensities of precipitation in the Chesapeake watershed. The small-scale BMP models should be first principal, deterministic models with realistic forcing functions. The specific purpose of this research would be to inform CBP managers of any needed adjustments to urban, agricultural, or other BMP load reductions in the context of the Phase 7 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model and CBP's BMP assessment and tracking in the Chesapeake TMDL. The assessment will be done under an agreed-upon current hydrology, likely corresponding to a base year condition of 1991 to 2000, and will examine future hydrologies of 2035, 2045, 2055, and 2075 that are consistent with the CBP-

[2] In the long term, but not covered under this RFA, more field and lab studies on urban stormwater, agricultural, and other CBP BMP responses to climate change impacts (e.g., increased frequency, intensity, and duration of precipitation) are needed to understand how design adaptations, maintenance practices, and site conditions interact with and respond to climate pressures.

approved climate change assessments used by the Phase 7 Watershed Model. The base year and future hydrologies will be provided by the CBPO.

The small-scale urban stormwater BMP nutrient and sediment removal efficiency analysis will be run on representative, developed urban landscapes in the Chesapeake watershed and consider the current CBP stormwater BMP efficiencies associated with the base hydrology (1991-2000). A relative change in efficiency from the base hydrology will be determined. The agricultural BMP nutrient and sediment removal efficiency analysis will include all CBP BMPs and represent small-scale BMP models in representative CBP physiographic regions, which may include the Coastal Plain, Piedmont, Ridge and Valley, Appalachian Highland, and other physiographic regions as deemed necessary. In the physiographic regions, representative land uses such as row crops, pasture, forest, specific crop rotations like corn-soybean-small grain and other representative land uses will be applied as needed for the specific CBP BMPs. Crop uptake of nutrients will be simulated as well as the influence of extended growing seasons and other aspects of phenology.

Tracking and technical guidance of Activity 4 will be through regular meetings with the CBP Modeling Workgroup and Urban Stormwater Workgroup and other CBP technical workgroups as assigned by the PO. The analysis and report will provide detailed review and discussion of the variables that impact the results of the assessment. The documentation and reports under Activity 4 will be effectively communicated to CBP managers, stormwater management practitioners, and watershed management practitioners.

Within the first two quarters of the initiation of Activity 4 tasks, the recipient will provide a detailed workplan for review by the CBP and EPA PO describing how **Modeling to Estimate the Impact of Future Hydrology on Simulated Urban, Agricultural, and Other CBP BMPs Nutrient and Sediment Removal Efficiencies** will be developed and how the modeling, analysis, documentation, and technical transfer and communication will be conducted.

Activities 1-4 will involve stakeholder engagement and training activities to improve awareness and understanding of tools, information, and resources, and support their use/application. This could include hosting a series of online or in-person trainings for relevant practitioners (e.g., state/local flood managers, hazard mitigation planners, land use and urban planners, residential community leaders, state/local water and emergency response agencies, etc.) in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and posting and promoting materials online. The project manager or principal investigator will consult with the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) and/or the Local Leadership Workgroup (LLWG) for Activities 1-3 and with the Modeling Workgroup for Activity 4, as well as with the USWG in developing, promoting, and delivering outreach activities.

Given the interrelated nature of these four elements, consistent communication and coordination amongst the recipients, PIs, and CBP partnership groups guiding the work will be necessary. It is required that the cooperative agreement recipient regularly brief and engage the Urban Stormwater Workgroup, Modeling Workgroup, Climate Resiliency Workgroup, LGAC, Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (STAC), Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT), and other CBP groups, as coordinated with the EPA PO.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan.

1. Linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan
The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan. Awards made under this solicitation will support *Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities*, *Objective 5.2 Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds* of the Strategic Plan.

EPA Order 5700.7A1 also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to accomplishment of the Activities described above in Section I.B.

2. Outputs
The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of potential outputs under the Scope of Work of this announcement may include but are not limited to the following:

Activity 1:

- Technical memorandum describing the most cost-effective methods to analyze subwatershed and local landscape factors that elevate future flooding risks for neighborhoods, municipal assets (ponds, culverts, public buildings, etc.) and municipal/public assets. This memorandum could include:
    - Examination of case studies of vulnerability assessments conducted by communities/municipalities of varying size both in and outside of the Chesapeake Bay watershed;
    - Recommended approaches for defining and prioritizing future flood risk factors to meet local needs;
    - Recommended rapid desktop assessment methods for identifying the areas and assets most vulnerable to future flood risk and damages;
    - Outline the site investigations that could be conducted to mitigate risks to most vulnerable areas and assets.
- A tool to guide local jurisdictions and residential communities in review of local codes, ordinances, and development regulations to reduce the vulnerability of current, future, and (re)development projects in communities. This could be similar in scope to a Codes and Ordinances Worksheet.
- Provide four or more online trainings (i.e., webcasts) for consumers/users (e.g., state/local flood managers, hazard mitigation planners, land use and urban planners, residential community leaders, state/local water and emergency response agencies, etc.) in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and post relevant materials and recordings to the CBP website.

Activity 2:

- Technical memorandum or guidance that improves local capacity to select the most cost-effective risk thresholds to protect specific classes of municipal infrastructure, using the most recent Chesapeake Bay extreme rainfall predictions released in 2021 https://midatlantic-idf.rcc-acis.org/.

  Guidance could include:
  - Review of current risk assessment and design thresholds employed by stormwater and floodplain managers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed,
  - A menu of options for using projected IDF curves to update resilience thresholds for stormwater infrastructure,
- Scope of work for generating new climate-informed IDF curves for storms with less than a year return frequency and/or storm event durations less than one hour and for updating the existing Projected Intensity-Duration-Frequency (IDF) Curve Data Tool for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and Virginia online tool.
- Provide four or more online trainings (i.e., webcasts) for consumers/users (e.g., state/local flood managers, hazard mitigation planners, land use and urban planners, residential community leaders, state/local water and emergency response agencies, etc.) in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and post relevant materials and recordings to the CBP website. Trainings may be in-person if recipient determines that in-person training would improve participation and/or help meet educational outcomes.

Activity 3:

- Guidance that includes adaptable criteria for stormwater design and maintenance specifications needed to increase resiliency and performance of stormwater BMPs under projected climate conditions. Guidance may include:
  - New "plumbing" criteria to manage inflows and overflows to bring online Low Impact Development (LID) practices.
  - Climate-resilient BMP performance enhancements such as soil amendments.
  - Landscaping and vegetation maintenance criteria to create stormwater plant communities that are best adapted to future climate conditions.
- Provide four or more online trainings (i.e., webcasts) for consumers/users (e.g., state/local flood managers, hazard mitigation planners, land use and urban planners, residential community leaders, state/local water and emergency response agencies, etc.) in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and post relevant materials and recordings to the CBP website.

Activity 4:

- Technical report detailing the results of research and modeling analysis, including estimates of uncertainty, of the impacts of future hydrology on simulated urban BMPs.

Semi-annual and final reports are required outputs for all activities, as specified in Section VI.C., Reporting, of this announcement.

3. Outcomes

The term "outcome" means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic

in nature but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of potential outcomes under the Scope of Work of this announcement may include but are not limited to the following:

Activity 1:

- Increased ability of Chesapeake Bay communities to assess the vulnerability of community assets to future flooding risks and to devise strategies to minimize these risks.

Activity 2:

- Increased capacity of Chesapeake Bay stormwater and floodplain managers/decision-makers to select appropriate and cost-effective risk thresholds/design conditions to protect specific classes of municipal assets (e.g., culverts, stream buffers, etc.).

Activity 3:

- Increased ability of Chesapeake Bay communities to develop stormwater design and maintenance criteria and ordinances to maintain the performance and resilience of stormwater practices installed in new or redeveloped areas.

Activity 4:

- Increased understanding of the impacts of future hydrology on urban BMPs, including of uncertainty and the variables that affect the assessment.
- Improved accuracy of calculations for urban BMP load reductions in the context of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model.

D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

This grant is made pursuant to CWA Section 117(d), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d), which authorizes EPA to issue grants and cooperative agreements for the purposes of protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem and is funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58). This project is subject to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 1500).

E. Minority Serving Institutions:

EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces. At the same time, EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation by including members of communities which may have not previously participated in such dialogues to participate in EPA programs. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including minority serving institutions (MSIs), to apply under this opportunity. For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered MSIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061(2)). A list of these schools can be found at Historically Black Colleges and Universities;

2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities;

3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at Hispanic-Serving Institutions;

4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; and

5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at Predominately Black Institutions.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

The total estimated federal funding under this solicitation is approximately $1,880,000 for one cooperative agreement. Funding will be awarded incrementally in the amount of $560,000 per year for Years 1-3 and $100,000 per year for Years 4-5 depending on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award under this announcement or award less than the estimated funding amounts above. Funding for the activity depends on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year(s), as funds may be limited based on these applicable considerations.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selection is made. Any additional selection for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decision.

B. Award Type

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

- Close monitoring of the grantee's performance to verify the results reported by the grantee;
- Collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- A review of proposed procurement in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318;
- Approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- Review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

For this project, federal involvement would typically be in the form of participation with other CBP partners and stakeholders in an advisory capacity to the grantee. The participation is expected to

include involvement through various CBP GITs and related committees and workgroups (on which EPA also participates to ensure that all the recommendations for technical work support the CBP partners). All work conducted is to support the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

C. Partial Funding

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

D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is five years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFA is **January 1, 2024**.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.

A. Eligible Applicants

Consistent with Assistance Listing 66.466 and CWA Section 117(d), competition under this solicitation is available for technical and general assistance grants to nonprofit organizations, State, tribal (federally-recognized) and local governments, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies. For-profit organizations are not eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA.

Consistent with the definition of Nonprofit organization at 2 CFR 200.1, the term nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that 2 CFR 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a non-profit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR 200.1 are also eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible.

Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status; such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. 1611.

B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

Pursuant to CWA Section 117(d)(2)(A), 33 USC Section 1267(d)(2)(A), the agency shall determine the cost-share requirements for awards. Assistance Listing 66.466, states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost-share ranging from 5 percent to 50 percent of eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For this RFA, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of 5 percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

Cost-share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Involvement from foundations, watershed groups, private sector, eligible governmental, as well as non-conventional partners can help with the match. The match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to the match provisions in grant regulations. Applications that do not demonstrate how the minimum 5 percent match will be met will be rejected. Selected recipients must comply with 2 CFR 200.306 when meeting a cost share.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., B., and C. to be considered eligible. 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. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this solicitation or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.

2. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submission through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

3. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with Grants.gov or SAM.gov. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission outside of Grants.gov.

4. Applications must be for projects linked to the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.

5. For an application to be considered eligible for funding, project-related work included in the application must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

6. Applications must show how they will meet the 5 percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B. Applications that fail to meet the minimum 5 percent cost-share requirement will be rejected. (See Appendix A for additional information regarding the budget narrative and formula for calculating cost share.)

7. Applications requesting funding over the maximum funding available ($1,880,000) will be rejected.

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

9. Applications must address Activities 1-4 described in Section I.B. to be considered eligible.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.

A. How to Obtain an Application Package

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from the application package available in the Workspace associated with this opportunity on Grants.gov.

B. Submission Process

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

Applicants must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined here. Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with submissions with respect to this opportunity only are addressed in section 3. Technical Issues with Submission below.

2. Submission Instructions

a. SAM.gov (System for Award Management) Registration Instructions

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using login.gov (1) to

complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the Entity Registration Checklist for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the Frequently Asked Question on the difference for additional details.

Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

Contact the Federal Service Desk for help with your SAM.gov account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday - Friday 8am - 8pm ET.

b. Grants.gov Registration Instructions

Once your SAM.gov account is active, you must register in Grants.gov. Grants.gov will electronically receive your organization information, such as e-Business (EBiz) point of contact email address and UEI. Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active Grants.gov registration. Grants.gov registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal grant before, please review the Grants.gov Applicant Registration instructions. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, the EBiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to members of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in Grants.gov. Please review the Intro to Grants.gov-Understanding User Roles and Learning Workspace - User Roles and Workspace Actions for details on this important process.

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. 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 application submission deadline.

Contact Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov to resolve technical issues with Grants.gov. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

c. Application Submission Process

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to Grants.gov and click the red "Apply" button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.

The electronic submission of your application to this funding opportunity must be made by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance. If the submit button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization's EBiz point of contact or contact Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Applicants need to ensure that the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

d. Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **September 22, 2023**, 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through Grants.gov does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

3. Technical Issues with Submission

If applicants experience technical issues during the submission of an application that they are unable to resolve, follow these procedures before the application deadline date:

1) Contact Grants.gov Support Center before the application deadline date.
2) Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
3) Send an email with the RFA number EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-15 in the subject line to Erin Chapman (chapman.erin@epa.gov) before the application deadline time and date and must include the following:
    a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
    b. Description of the issue
    c. The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit prior to the application submission deadline date because they did not properly or timely

register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov.

4. Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2) Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3) EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4) EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report (see Tips for Completing EPA Form 4700-4 for guidance)
5) Project Narrative Attachment Form – The project narrative should be prepared as described in Appendix A of the announcement.
6) Budget Narrative Attachment Form – The budget narrative should include a spreadsheet that shows each year's cost for the salaries, fringe benefits, total salaries/wages, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual expenses, other cost, and indirect cost. An optional multi-year budget detail template is available at https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance. For more information, please refer to RAIN-2019-G02, Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance.

Optional Documents:

7) Other Attachment Form – The applicant's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement should be included, as applicable. See RAIN-2018-G02-R, Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements for additional information about indirect costs.

C. Project Narrative Requirements

Each application will be evaluated using the criteria in Section V.B. of this announcement. All application review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the project narrative. The project narrative shall not exceed **15** pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10 and the application must be submitted in an 8 ½" x 11" page size format. **Note that the 15 pages include all supporting materials, including resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support.** The 15-page limit does not include documentation of non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, the SF-424, SF-424A, budget detail, Key Contacts Form and 4700-4 form. If you submit more than 15 pages for the project narrative, the additional pages will be discarded and will not be reviewed. See Appendix A for additional instructions.

D. Other Application Information

1. Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. EPA implemented the Executive Order in 40 CFR Part 29. EPA may require applicants selected for funding to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of

Contact (SPOC) for review as provided at 40 CFR 29.7 and 40 CFR 29.8. The SPOC list can be found on the webpage below.[3]

Office of Federal Financial Management Resources and Other Information

EPA may require successful applicants from states that do not have a SPOC to provide a copy of their application for review to directly affected state, area-wide, regional and local government entities as provided at 40 CFR 29.7 and 40 CFR 29.8. These reviews are not required before applying. Only applicants that EPA selects for funding under this announcement are subject to the Intergovernmental Review requirement.

2. Funding Restrictions

a. Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority

Recipients applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirements for "Administrative Costs" under the CWA Section 117 (d)(4), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), where they are defined as "the cost of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering" the grant, and which also states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award, which equals both the federal and recipient shares. *Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet* is provided as an example of a method to calculate the 10-percent limitation. You are not required to submit Appendix B with your application.

b. Allowable Costs

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E. In accordance with applicable law, regulation, and policy, any recipient of funding must agree to comply with restrictions on using assistance funds for unauthorized lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts). See e.g. 2 CFR 200.450. Funds generally cannot be used to pay for travel by federal agency staff. Proposed project activities must also comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. The applicant must also review the solicitation for any other programmatic funding restrictions applicable to this program. If awarded funding, the recipient must refer to the terms and conditions of its award for other funding restrictions applicable to its award. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure compliance with these requirements. In addition, please see 2 CFR 200 for information on pre-award costs.

E. Coalition Coverage

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subrecipients of the recipient (the "pass-through entity"). Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR 200.1 and comply with EPA's Subaward Policy. The pass-through entity

[3] Alternatively, the SPOC list and additional guidance concerning the Intergovernmental Review process can be found on the EPA Region 3 website at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-region-3-grants-and-audit-management-branch-intergovernmental-review-process-and-single.

that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 CFR 200.332, subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for proper use of EPA funding. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards under this grant program but may receive procurement contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 CFR 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants. Refer to the Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a "partner" or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.

A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews applications for threshold eligibility purposes as described in Section III, CBPO will conduct a merit evaluation of each eligible application. Reviews will be performed by a team of professionals from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. All reviewers will sign a conflict-of-interest statement indicating they have no conflict.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

The evaluation criteria below will be used to review eligible applications submitted under this RFA.

Criteria	Points
1. Scope and Approach: Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the quality and degree to which they sufficiently address the key program elements discussed in Section I.B. including: a. A technically sound and appropriate approach to address Activity 1: Vulnerability Assessment Tool for Local Communities. (8 points) b. A technically sound and appropriate approach to address Activity 2: Decision Support Tool for Local Resilience. (8 points) c. A technically sound and appropriate approach to address Activity 3: Establish Resilient Design Adaptations for Stormwater Infrastructure and Restoration Practices. (8 points) d. A technically sound and appropriate approach to address Activity 4: Modeling to Estimate the Impact of Future Hydrology on Simulated Urban, Agricultural, and Other CBP BMPs. (8 points)	32

2. Organizational Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, the application will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project described in Section I.B., considering: a. How well it demonstrates that the applicant has the experience, knowledge, and skill to conduct the proposed Activities under Section I.B. (10 points) b. The extent and quality to which it demonstrates the ability of the applicant to timely and successfully achieve the Activities to support the CBP partners, as described in Section I.B. (13 points) c. Past performance of the applicant in successfully completing and managing assistance agreements identified in their project narrative. Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements (but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last five years (preferably EPA agreements). (5 points) d. History of applicant in meeting the reporting requirements under assistance agreements identified in their project narrative, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable, final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not. (5 points) Note: In evaluating applicants under items c and d of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items a. and b. above--a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors. Prior to naming a contractor (including consultants) or subrecipient in your application as a "partner", please carefully review Section IV.d, "Contracts and Subawards", of EPA's Solicitation Clauses. In evaluating this criterion, EPA will only consider the experience of any contractor(s), including consultants, if the applicant demonstrates they were selected in compliance with the competitive procurement requirements in 2 CFR 200.319 and 2 CFR 200.320. EPA does not accept justifications for sole source contracts for services or products available in the commercial marketplace based on a contractor's role in preparing an application.	33
3. Cost-effectiveness: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate each application based on the degree of cost-effectiveness, considering the following factors: organizational overhead, budget breakdown, and ability to control costs for the relevant Activity listed in Section I. (10 points)	10

4. Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application includes an adequate plan to gather information and lessons learned from the project and transfer that documentation, information, data, results, and recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders across the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner. (10 points)	10
5. Innovation and Modernization of Methods Over Time: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the extent and quality of the application's description of innovative efforts to deliver results by means of concepts, approaches, methods, or combinations thereof. (5 points)	5
6. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that funding will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (5 points)	5
7. Environmental Results: Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the environmental outputs and outcomes identified in Section I.C of the RFA. (5 points)	5

C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in Section V.B. above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked applications to the CBPO Director or Deputy Director for final selection. In making the final funding decision, the selection official may also consider programmatic goals and priorities, including those described in the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.

A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that the applicant will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around **November 1, 2023** either via electronic or postal mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Region 3 Grants Management Office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official is authorized to bind the government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided either via email or U.S. Postal Service.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application package. A federal project officer assists in the application process and negotiates a work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

If your application is selected for funding, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-policies-and-guidance-grants.

C. Reporting

Progress Report/Final Report Requirements

The awarded applicant will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports (every six months) throughout the duration of the agreement to update the EPA Project Officer on project progress. Semi-annual progress reports are due within 30 days after the end of each reporting period, as detailed in the award terms and conditions. The recipient will also be required to participate in semi-annual calls/meetings with the EPA Project Officer to discuss progress. A final progress report is due to the EPA Project Officer within 120 after the end of the award performance period. As requested by the CBP partnership and in coordination with the EPA Project Officer, the recipient will provide progress and informational presentations to CBP technical and management-decision making groups.

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans
In accordance with 2 CFR 1500.12, projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

The QMP must document quality assurance policies and practices that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet program objectives. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA's Quality Management Plan (QMP) Standard. The recipient's QMP should be reviewed and updated annually as needed. The QMP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 45 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation.

The recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The QAPP is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. A model template and guidance for developing QAPPs can be found at https://www.epa.gov/quality/template-developing-generic-quality-assurance-project-plan-or-plan-elements-model.

D. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement. Note, that the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR

parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

E. Mandatory Disclosures

As required by 2 CFR 200.113, non-federal entities or applicants for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.339 including suspension and debarment.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact Erin Chapman via email at chapman.erin@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-15). All questions and answers will be posted on https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

In developing your application, you may find the following documents helpful. Websites for guidance documents are listed here. If you prefer a paper copy, please call 1-800-YOUR BAY.

Boundaries of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/maps

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

Chesapeake Bay Program Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance
https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans
https://www.epa.gov/grants/implementation-quality-assurance-requirements-organizations-receiving-epa-financial

Please visit the EPA Grants website (https://www.epa.gov/grants), the EPA Region 3 Grants website (https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3) or the Chesapeake Bay Program website (https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance) if you have questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Further information on CBP committees is located at:
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/how_we_are_organized

APPENDIX A. APPLICATION FORMAT
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III
EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-15

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

Project Narrative Format: Use the Project Narrative Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. Project narratives as described below shall not exceed 15 single-spaced pages in length. The project narrative must be submitted in an 8 ½" x 11" page size format, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 15 pages include all supporting materials, including resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support. The 15-page limit does not include documentation of non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, SF-424, SF-424A, budget narrative, Key Contacts Form and 4700-4 form. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

1. Name, address (street and email), and contact information of the applicant

2. Background - Include the following in this section:

i) Project title
ii) Brief description of your organization.
iii) Documentation of non-profit status, if applicable.
iv) Brief biographies of applicant lead(s) including resumes and/or curriculum vitae.
v) Funding requested. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost-share or in-kind resources.
vi) UEI number — See Section IV.B

3. Work plan - Include the following in this section:

i) A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements of each Activity, as described in Section I.B of the announcement.

ii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the application will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project, as outlined in Section I.C of the announcement.
- Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outputs for the activity are provided in Section I.C.2.
- Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outcomes are included in section I.C.3.

iii) Review Criteria**:**
Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFA. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative.

With specific respect to the Programmatic Capability Past Performance factor in V.B: Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last five years (no more than five agreements and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

In 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 past reporting information, please indicate this in the application 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.

Budget narrative: For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a budget narrative breakdown by the major budget categories (i.e., personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). For more information, please refer to EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment's budget guidance at https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02 and indirect cost guidance located at https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02-r.

In each of the budgets, include the cost-share amount (a minimum of 5 percent for each of the total project costs) and demonstrate how the cost-share will be met, including, if applicable, letters of commitment from any third-party contributors. Please note that subaward costs must be itemized under a separate sub-line item within the "Other" budget cost category.

In addition, grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirement for "Administrative Costs" under CWA Section 117 (d)(4), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent administration cost cap is located in Appendix B: Chesapeake Bay Program Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet.

To calculate the specific minimum cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

1. EPA assistance amount (including any in-kind) ÷ 95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
2. 100% of Total Grant Amount × 5% = Applicant's Minimum Cost-Share Amount
   (Note: Always round upward to the next whole dollar.)

For example, $1,880,000 EPA funding ÷ 95% = $1,978,947.37 x 5% = $98,948 Minimum Cost-Share

APPENDIX B. BUDGET GUIDANCE

EPA-I-R3-CBP-23-15

SAMPLE
(DO NOT SUBMIT WORKSHEET WITH APPLICATION)

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST CAP WORKSHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: In accordance with Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 117(d)(4) and 117(e)(6) , the costs of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under CWA Section 117(d) or 117(e) shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. The annual grant award is the total costs including Federal and cost share amounts. The worksheet below is provided to assist you in calculating allowable administrative costs. The Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) should reflect how your administrative costs will comply with the cap. For specific guidance, refer to the next page of this sample "Compliance with CWA Section 117 Requirements Restricting Administrative Costs."

Total Costs	$ _____
Cap %	X .10
Limit on Administrative Costs	$ (a) _____
List Administrative Costs: (Budgeted costs for application)	
_____	$ _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Total	$ (b) _____

Line (b) cannot exceed Line (a).

COMPLIANCE WITH CWA SECTION 117
RESTRICTING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Statutory Authority

Under statutory authority, applicants applying for Chesapeake Bay Program grants/cooperative agreements under Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 117 (d) or (e) must adhere to the requirement on administrative costs as follows:

- Under CWA Section 117(a)(1) Administrative Cost - The term "administrative cost" means the cost of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under this section.
- Under CWA Section 117(d)(4) - Administrative Costs. - Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.
- Under CWA Section 117(e)(6) - Administrative Costs. -Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Guidance for Determining Administrative Costs

As determined by EPA/CBPO, the following provides guidance in determining administrative costs for grants/cooperative agreements under CWA Section 117 (d) and (e).

1. Administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits charged against the project or program element for the sole purpose of administering the grant/cooperative agreements shall not exceed 10% of the annual grant **award (Federal and cost share)**. 100% of the salaries and fringe benefits related to these functions are considered administrative costs. Examples of administrative costs include, but are not limited to, preparation and submission of grant applications, fiscal tracking of grants funds, maintaining project files, and collection and submission of deliverables.

2. Non-administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits related to the implementation of the project or program element of the grant/cooperative agreement are not considered administrative costs. None of the salaries and fringe benefit costs related to these functions shall be considered administrative costs. Example:

- The salaries and fringe benefits for technical staff to conduct work to accomplish specific Bay Program goals as outlined in the program or project elements are not administrative costs.

3. Calculation of Administrative Costs

In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, use the format above or a similar format to calculate the costs and include in the Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).

4. Questions Regarding Administrative Costs

The recipients shall direct questions to the EPA Project Officer who will determine what costs should be included as administrative costs on a case-by-case basis.