

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Funding Opportunity Title: Manage the Compliance Assistance Center Program

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Catalog of Domestic Assistance Number: 66.305 - Compliance Assistance Support for Services to the Regulated Community and Other Assistance Providers

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OECA-MAMPD-2017-01

Dates: The closing date and time for receipt of proposal submission is **August 18, 2017 by 11:59 P.M. Eastern Standard Time (EDT)** in order to be considered for funding. Proposals must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/>) no later than August 18, 2017, 11:59 P.M. EDT in order **to be considered for funding**. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in [Section VII](#) before **August 4, 2017**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/compliance/compliance-assistance-centers>.

Notes to Applicants:

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. A final application will be requested from a single eligible entity whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The entity will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of a final application package.

If you name subrecipients and/or contractor(s) in your proposal as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the Contracts and Subawards clause in Section IV of the Announcement found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. SUMMARY

Since 1996, in partnership with industry associations, universities and other government agencies, EPA has supported the development and maintenance of the [Compliance Assistance Centers](#) (Center Program) and Center resources. Each Center is targeted to a specific industry, group of industries, local government, or Federal facilities, and explains in plain language, environmental regulations that apply to that sector and offers technical assistance on compliance. Currently, four cooperative agreements supporting the Centers are in place. These agreements expire between April 2017 and September 2017.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to manage the Center Program. Specifically, EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to present innovative and effective approaches and partnerships that will support existing Center websites and resources and address the long-term financial security of the Centers as EPA funding is reduced over time.

In 2001, EPA awarded a cooperative agreement to the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences (NCMS) to develop and operate a common web-based platform to support existing Centers and from which new Centers could be launched. Per the cooperative agreement, the NCMS developed the Compliance Assistance Centers Platform (Center Platform). A second cooperative agreement was awarded to NCMS 2005 and a third cooperative agreement was awarded to NCMS in 2010 to continue the operation and maintenance of the Center Platform.

The current Center Platform cooperative agreement expires in September 2017. Currently, nine Centers reside on the Center Platform. Additionally, the Center Platform manages several web resources, including the [State Resource Locators](#), that are available for all Centers to use. The shared use of Center Platform resources avoids duplication of effort across individual Centers. EPA will ensure that the successful applicant has access to all data contained in the Center Platform produced with EPA funds as well as access to any Center Platform software or other intellectual property developed under Center Platform cooperative agreements.

Applicants may include a variety of approaches to managing the Center Program. Examples include:

- Design a system for identifying non-profit and institutions of higher education subrecipients qualified to use financial assistance to operate single or multiple sector Centers. The successful applicant(s) will be a “pass-through entity” as defined at 2 CFR 200.74 under this approach.
- Prepare and advertise to a variety of for-profit or non-profit contractors a RFP to provide services to support the successful applicant’s own operation of one or more of the Centers or to support the grantees operation of one or more of the Centers.
- Seek industry financial and in-kind sponsorship(s)/aid to support the Centers.
- Implement fee-based approaches to operating the Centers.

EPA encourages applicants to offer alternative approaches for operation of the Center Program that are consistent with requirements for financial transactions in the UGG. Approaches may include:

Selection of Subrecipients

Proposals that include subawards must address: 1) how a system will be designed to identify non-profit and institution of higher education subrecipients qualified to use financial assistance to operate single or multiple sector Centers; 2) how the subrecipients will be monitored for successful operation of the Center(s) under a system that complies with 2 CFR 200.331 and EPA’s Subaward Policy; 3) how technical support will be provided to the subrecipients as needed; and 4) qualitative and quantitative measures of subrecipient outputs.

Use of Contractors

Applicants that will use contractor support must compete the contracts for supplies, equipment and services, including consultant contracts, unless the amount of the transaction is less than \$3,500. 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 or past experience with the applicant. Also see the Contracts and Subawards clause, located in the additional provisions link provided in Section IV F of this solicitation.

Use of Industry Financial and/or in-Kind Sponsorship

Applicants, independent of EPA, may seek industry financial and in-kind sponsorships to support the Centers. EPA will not participate in sponsorship negotiations / discussions between applicants and potential industry sponsors.

Funding provided under this announcement supports the following goal and objective of EPA’s Strategic plan for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 – 2018: Goal 5: Protecting Human Health and the Environment by Enforcing Laws and Assuring Compliance. Information on the EPA Strategic Plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>.

Eligible applicants under this announcement are non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that

advance compliance with environmental laws and regulations. Public and non-profit private institutions of higher education are considered non-profit organizations and are eligible under this announcement. EPA will also accept proposals from state, tribal and local governments. Non-profit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply under this announcement. For profit organizations including proprietary institutions of higher education, and individuals are also ineligible for funding under this announcement.

The total federal amount of funding expected to be available under this announcement is approximately \$1,700,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that one cooperative agreement will be incrementally funded under this announcement with a five-year project period. Any subawards funded under the cooperative agreement must be completed prior to the end of the cooperative agreement project period. Subawards need to be completed in sufficient time for the recipient to, for example, aggregate results and ensure that subrecipients have been reimbursed for all incurred costs.

B. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1. COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE CENTER GRANT OBJECTIVES

The Centers provide web-based user-friendly "first-stop shops" where regulated entities can find comprehensive, easy-to-understand compliance information pre-packaged to fit their special needs. Since 1996, EPA has funded the Centers through cooperative agreements. Currently, four cooperative agreements supporting the Centers are in place. These agreements expire between April 2017 and September 2017. In accordance with EPA policy encouraging competition for assistance agreements, EPA now seeks proposals from qualified applicants who can partner with EPA, industry groups, environmental groups, various local government support organizations, and other interested parties and who are capable of supporting the continued operation and maintenance of the Center Program. Ongoing Center work will be consolidated and funded under a single cooperative agreement to be awarded under this RFP.

In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their ability, and describe an approach, to implement innovative and effective approaches and partnerships that will support existing Center Websites and resources and address the long-term financial security of the Centers as EPA funding is reduced over time.

Specifically, as part of their project approach in the proposal narrative, applicants should demonstrate their ability to:

- Maintain a web portal from which all Centers and Center resources can be accessed. Currently, Center resources are accessible through the [Compliance Assistance Center Portal](#);
- Support the development of new web-based tools to help industry sectors understand and comply with environmental regulations;
- Seek effective approaches and partnerships to maintain compliance assistance websites for: [Border Compliance](#), [Construction](#), [Food Processing](#), [Healthcare](#) (including hospitals, assisted living, dental and veterinary), [local government](#), [metal finishing](#), [paints and coatings](#) (application), [transportation](#), [Beneficial Use Portal](#) (providing resources for the beneficial use of industrial byproducts, and the [Combustion Portal](#) (providing federal and state compliance information and sustainability content for various combustion processes); and

- Maintain the [Gateway to State Resource Locators](#) which provides access to state resources including state-specific contacts, permits, regulations, and compliance guides.

All Websites maintained by the grant recipient must be kept up to date on environmental issues and a plan must be developed to identify and repair broken links.

The maintenance of the following Centers is not addressed by this RFP: [Agriculture](#), [Auto Recycling](#), [Auto Repair](#), [Chemical](#), [Education](#), [Federal Facilities](#), and [Printing](#). These Centers are either funded through other mechanisms or have become self-sufficient and operate in lieu of EPA funding. It is expected that the applicant will continue to link to these Centers through a web portal providing access to all Center resources.

Proposals that include the use of subawards should address the applicant's capabilities to:

- Design a system for identifying non-profit and institution of higher education subrecipients qualified to use financial assistance to operate single or multiple sector Centers.
- Oversee and monitor subrecipients in a manner that complies with 2 CFR 200.331 and EPA's Subaward Policy for successful operation of Centers.; and
- Qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the effectiveness of compliance assistance resources developed / provided and outputs generated with EPA funding.

Eligible entities for a competitive subaward program include nonprofit institutions/ organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, states, local governments, U.S. territories, and interstate agencies. For the purposes of this announcement, EPA has determined that the following types of entities are **ineligible** for the competitive subaward program: for-profit entities, individuals and all federal agencies. EPA award officials will disapprove the costs of proposed subaward work to 501(c)(4) organizations that lobby identified in an application, or workplan changes requiring prior approval, if the work involves lobbying activities or would otherwise violate the principles of EPA's Subaward Policy.

Effective partnerships are very important to the Center Program. In their proposals, applicants should identify appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully create long-term success of the Centers. Partnerships between organizations focused on compliance can greatly benefit from one another's experience. Applicants should also include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. If the applicant chooses to identify any partner entity who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants), please refer to the Contracts and Subawards solicitation clause found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses> in Section IV of the Announcement before doing so. EPA will not consider the qualifications of a partner entity who will receive subaward unless the applicant selects them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions in EPA's Subaward Policy.

2. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Agreement will be funded on a "multimedia" basis under Section 103 of the Clean Air Act, Section 104 of the Clean Water Act, Section 8001 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 10 of the Toxic Substances Control Act and Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. Applicants are encouraged to review these statutes and ensure that all of the activities contained in their proposals are consistent with the scope of EPA's authority.

3. EPA'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

Funding under this agreement will support EPA's FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 5; Objective 5.1, achieve environmental protection

through improved compliance. For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>.

All proposed projects must demonstrate a linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of improving compliance.

Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative, but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- The number of Website user sessions;
- The number of Website page views;
- Downloads of compliance documents / assistance material;
- Number of subscribers to Center resources; and
- The level of commitment from third-party organizations to provide financial or in-kind support to help maintain the Centers Program or individual Centers.

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

Examples of potential environmental outcomes from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement may include:

- Increased understanding of environmental regulations;
- Improved environmental practices as a result of Center use; and
- Reduced, treated, or eliminated pollution as a result of Center use.

As part of the proposal narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA's discussion of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement under this announcement with a total Federal funding level of approximately \$1,700,000. The cooperative agreement is anticipated to be incrementally funded at approximately \$340,000 for each year of the project with a maximum Federal award amount of \$1,700,000 over a five-year project period, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. The successful applicant should provide EPA with a negotiated, five-year work plan covering five distinct one-year periods of performance. Any subawards made under this agreement need to be

completed in sufficient time for the recipient to, for example, aggregate results and ensure that subrecipients have been reimbursed for all incurred costs.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund the proposal by funding discrete portions or phases of the proposed project. EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

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

1. Monitoring the grant recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
2. Collaborating during the performance of the scope of work;
3. Reviewing and commenting on Website content prepared / maintained under the cooperative agreement (the final decision of the content of Website rests with the recipient);
4. Alerting grant recipient of new regulations impacting Center users;
5. Participating in conference calls to discuss project progress;
6. Reviewing qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient and will not recommend or suggest that recipients hire particular individuals or firms);
7. Reviewing and providing comment on any system to identify non-profit and institution of higher education subrecipients qualified to use financial assistance to operate single or multiple Centers;
8. Reviewing and providing comments on the substantive terms of subaward agreements; and
9. Participating in the review process for any selection of subrecipients to the extent permitted in EPA's Subaward Policy (the final decision on selection of subrecipients rests with the recipient.)

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants must be a nonprofit organization as that term is defined in Section 4(6) of the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999, Public Law 96-107, and 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note. Public and private institutions of higher education are eligible to apply. EPA will also accept applications from state, tribal and local governments. However, nonprofit organizations as described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. In addition, for profit organizations, including proprietary educational institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply.

Nonprofit organizations may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a nonprofit organization at 2 CFR 200.70.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

There are no statutory or regulatory match requirements. However, leveraging with added resources of funding or in-kind services will be considered in evaluating the cost-effectiveness of a project proposal. (See Section V, [PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION](#))

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in [Section III A.](#) of this announcement.
2. Proposals must **substantially comply** with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section V of this announcement or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section V.D.3 with respect to the proposal narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section V.D.3 establishes a 30-page, single-spaced proposal narrative page limit that includes the cover page.
3. Proposals must be submitted through [Grants.gov](#) as specified in [Section IV](#) of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in [Section IV](#)) on or before the proposal submission deadline published in [Section IV](#) of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in [Section IV](#) of this announcement to ensure that their proposal is timely submitted.
4. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to the EPA mishandling or because of technical problems attributable to Grants.gov or relevant Sam.gov system issues and not the applicant. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Tracy Back at back.Tracy@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

IV. GRANTS.GOV SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. REQUIREMENT TO SUBMIT THROUGH GRANTS.GOV AND LIMITED EXCEPTION PROCEDURES

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to [Grants.gov](#), the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) *at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement* to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

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

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

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

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

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

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2016, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2016). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2016 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2017, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2017.

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

B. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and whose DUNS number is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS number listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to [Grants.gov](https://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 [Adobe Reader Compatibility Information on Grants.gov](https://www.adobe.com/reader/compatibility).

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OECA-MAMPD-2016-01 or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.305), in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

Please note that Grants.gov is strongly encouraging users to sign up for and use their "Workspace" feature when applying for opportunities. Grants.gov will be phasing out the "legacy" application process, so EPA recommends that all applicants begin using Workspace as soon as possible so they are prepared when the "legacy" application process is no longer available.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than 11:59 PM EDT August 18, 2017. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all of the application materials described below using the grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the "Show Instructions" tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Application Materials:

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-4284)
4. Grants.gov Lobbying Form
5. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
6. EPA Form 4700-4 – Preaward Compliance Review Report
7. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)- prepared as described in [Section IV.D.3](#) of this announcement

Optional Documents:

8. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL), if applicable
9. Other Attachments, if applicable

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Tracy Back, at (202) 564-7076. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

C. TECHNICAL ISSUES WITH SUBMISSION

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

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

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

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

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to [Grants.Gov](https://www.grants.gov) by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to Tracy Back with the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OECA-MAMPD-2016-01 in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Tracy Back at 202-564-7076. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [www.Sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), it is essential to call [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not

able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 1-606-545- 5035. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Tracy Back at 202-564-7076.

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

c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal and it is too late to reapply, promptly send an email to Tracy Back (back.tracy@epa.gov) with the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OECA-MAMPD-2016-01, in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

D. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very carefully and address all requirements.

All proposal packages must include the following three documents:

1. Signed Standard Form 424 (SF-424). Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form and have it signed. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

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

Complete the form. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the total indirect amount should also be indicated on line 22. In Section B: Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for non-federal cost-share/match, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (federal funds and non-federal cost share/match).

3. Proposal Narrative

The Proposal Narrative must include sections A-E below. The Proposal Narrative is limited to no more than 30 pages typewritten single-spaced 8.5 x 11 inch pages (a page is one side of paper) (**except** for documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. Additional pages beyond the 30-page limit will not be considered. Supporting materials (such as letters of support

from potential partners and annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit for the proposal narrative.

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

A. Cover Page including:

- a. Project title;
- b. Name of applicant;
- c. List of all potential partners associated with the project;
- d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
- e. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested, the non-federal cost share/match, and the total project cost); and
- f. Abstract/project summary (recommended 75 words or less): Provide a brief description of the proposed project.

B. Project Description containing:

- a. Project Goals and Objectives (describe a plan for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes which would include the following elements):
 - Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan – Provide the objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal 5: Protecting Human Health and the Environment by Enforcing Laws and Assuring Compliance; Objective 5.1: achieve environmental protection through improved compliance. (see [Section I.B.3](#));
 - Results of Activities (Outputs) – Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project, and an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in [Section I.B.3](#)); and
 - Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of this project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of project commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in [Section I.B.3](#)).
- b. Project Approach: Describe your approach for supporting and maintaining the Center program. The project approach should demonstrate the applicant's ability to:
 - Support the assistance needs of regulated entities;
 - Support the maintenance of Center web-based resources;
 - Conduct outreach to promote Center use;
 - Maintain updated and accurate content on Center web sites;
 - Establish communications with Center stakeholders; and
 - As needed, design a system for competitively selecting subrecipients or contractors in a manner that complies with the Procurement Standards and Subrecipient Monitoring and Management requirements of the UGG and EPA's Subaward Policy. Applicants that choose not to use partnerships to conduct the project must clearly demonstrate in the submission's

Programmatic Capability (see Section IV.D) the organization's ability to successfully implement the project without third party support.

- Use of Partnerships: Describe the agencies/organizations who you will partner with as appropriate and necessary to successfully conduct the project. Include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. Describe how these partnerships will contribute to the success of Center program. If you choose to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants) please refer to the Contracts and Subawards clause in Section IV of the Announcement found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>, as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless you select them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Letters of support from potential partners are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the proposal narrative.
- c. Milestone Schedule: Provide a milestone schedule that covers each year of the total grant period request and provides a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks. The milestone schedule should show timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks. Include an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow acceptance of the award by the successful applicant.

C. Programmatic Capability addressing:

- a. Organizational Experience. Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
- b. Staff expertise/qualifications. Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). Annotated resumes of applicant's key staff are also encouraged and are not included in the page limit.

D. Detailed Budget Narrative providing a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A such as "other" and "contractual". Any subaward funding should be located under the "other" cost category.

- a. Total costs must include both federal and any cost share/match (non-federal) components. Funds from third parties provided to support the project through agreements between the applicant and third parties should not be included in the total cost calculations. Describe each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of costs.
- b. When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant's 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 the agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the project.

E. **Past Performance** describing federally funded and/or non-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 five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements. Describe:

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

In evaluating applicant's past performance, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and 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 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). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in the proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see also [Section V](#)).

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

E. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposals submitted through Grants.gov must be received by 11:59 PM EDT August 18, 2017. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

F. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR APPLICANTS INCORPORATED INTO THE SOLICITATION

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

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

Project Criteria 1	Project Sub-Criteria
Project Goals and Objectives (15 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on each of the following sub-criterion: A. The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (10 points) B. The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (5 points)

Project Criteria 2	Project Sub-Criteria
Project Approach (35 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the project approach demonstrates the applicant's ability to: A. Support the compliance assistance needs of regulated entities through management of the Center program. (15 points) B. Develop and maintain working relationships with experts and national organizations devoted to compliance with environmental regulations. (5 points) C. Conduct outreach to promote Center use. (5 points) D. Maintain updated and accurate content on Center web sites. (10)

Project Criteria 3	Project Sub-Criteria
Milestone Schedule (10 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates each of the following sub-criterion: A. A clearly articulated milestone schedule for project tasks. (5 points) B. The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information

	provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. Describe the cost-effectiveness of all costs. (5 points)
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Project Criteria 4	Project Sub-Criteria
Programmatic Capability (30 Points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's: A. Familiarity with applicable federal and state regulations and expertise in developing tools (e.g., training, plain-language guides, factsheets, contact locators) to improve an audiences' understanding of their regulatory obligations. (5 points) B. Provide program knowledge and capability to complete project goals. Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated on their plan and ability to provide qualified in-house staff or develop necessary partnerships and/or plan to maintain existing partnerships to successfully conduct the project. Description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks, and how any partnership will contribute to the success of the Center program will be taken into consideration. Proposals including industry financial and/or in-kind sponsorships to support the Centers must demonstrate a firm commitment from identified entities regarding such support. (20 points) C. Understanding of the environmental needs of regulated entities demonstrated through past activities, or intends to partner with an organization with such expertise. (5 points)

Project Criteria 5	Project Sub-Criteria
Past Performance (10 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their: A. Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). (3 points) B. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and

Project Criteria 5	Project Sub-Criteria
	not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (3 points) C. Extent and quality to which they documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g. outcomes and outputs) under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed in the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented why not. (4 points) Note: In evaluating applicants under A., B., and C. above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and/or prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history must indicate that in the proposal and they will receive a neutral score for the factor (i.e., 1.5 points for subcriterion A., 1.5 points for subcriterion B., and 2 points for subcriterion C.). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factor (i.e., 0 points for subcriterion A., 0 points for subcriterion B., and 0 points for subcriterion C.).

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

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

A panel comprised of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the selection criteria listed in [Section V. A.](#) The panel will develop a ranking list of the proposals based on the evaluation scores received. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account programmatic priorities.

C. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Additional Provisions Incorporated By Reference

Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation:
Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and

Performance can be found on the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#) page. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Following EPA's evaluations of the proposals, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. A final application will be requested from the eligible applicant whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The applicant will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance, nor is it a guarantee that the award will be made.

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

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

The selected project will be posted on EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/compliance/compliance-assistance-centers>. This website may also contain additional information about this RFP. Deadline extensions, if any, will be posted on this website and www.grants.gov.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

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

C. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted semi-annually and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the workplan consistent with 2 CFR § 200.328, Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance, and 40 CFR Part 45. This includes any problems, issues or difficulties encountered that may affect the quality requirements of the project. The recipient must indicate what if any corrective actions were taken. Award recipients will be required to submit the final

report electronically and in hard copy and should include, in addition, a 1-2 page project summary. If travel assistance is provided to selected attendees to attend wetland meetings/training workshops, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the workshops.

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://www2.epa.gov/grants/dispute-resolution-procedures>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement.

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://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by August 4, 2017 and written responses will be posted on the EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/compliance/compliance-assistance-centers>

Agency Contact

Tracy Back
202-564-7076
E-mail: back.tracy@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

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

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements apply to these grants 2 CFR 200.414. QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Successful applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist successful applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the successful applicant may work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the

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