Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Water, Office of Wastewater Management

Funding Opportunity Title: Training Workshop Support Activities for the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Programs

Announcement Type: Request for Applications (RFA)

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWM-23-03

Assistance Listing: 66.436

Dates: The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **June 23, 2023, by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET) in order to be considered for funding.** Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov) no later than **11:59 PM ET June 23, 2023**, **in order to be considered for funding.** Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency contact identified in Section VII by **June 8, 2023.** Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/srf-training-workshop-support.

COVID-19 Update: EPA is providing flexibilities to applicants experiencing challenges related to COVID-19. Please see the Flexibilities Available to Organizations Impacted by COVID-19 clause in Section IV of EPA's Solicitation Clauses.

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

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Section I. Funding Opportnity Description

A. Background

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for four annual three-day National State Revolving Fund (SRF) Infrastructure Financing and Training Workshops. The workshops will target SRF program officials and other interested stakeholders and provide a forum for training in the programmatic, financial, and technical aspects of the two SRF programs, the Clean Water SRF and the Drinking Water SRF.

The EPA's SRF programs have helped a wide range of communities receive the assistance they need to help repair, restore or replace their drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Each program is a federal-state partnership that can provide grants to all 50 states and Puerto Rico to capitalize SRF loan programs and provide low interest loans to recipients for eligible water quality and drinking water projects. Loan repayments paid back into the SRF are recycled to fund new water quality and drinking water projects for other recipients. SRF programs also provide needed technical assistance to help communities select and design projects as well as prepare and submit applications to the programs. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA) (PL 117-58, November 15, 2021, 135 Stat 429), sometimes referred to as the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), provides increased funding for principal forgiveness loans and grants available to disadvantaged communities and communities that meet the affordability criteria to equitably fund water infrastructure projects. For more information on the SRF programs, go to: https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf for the Clean Water SRF program and https://www.epa.gov/drinkingwatersrf for the Drinking Water SRF program.

The National SRF Infrastructure Financing and Training Workshops support EPA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 – FY 2026 Strategic Plan at https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan. Awards made under this announcement support Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for all Communities, Objective 5.1: Ensure Safe Drinking Water and Reliable Water Infrastructure. As discussed in Section I.D, the statutory authority for the awards expected to be made under this announcement is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

EPA has previously awarded financial assistance agreements to nonprofit organizations to provide training workshop support activities for the SRF programs similar to those described in this announcement. As authorized by 2 CFR 200.315, EPA will provide data and materials developed under those agreements to successful applicants if necessary to avoid duplication of effort. Funds awarded under this announcement may be used by recipients to promote participation and to support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend the workshops.

B. Project Description

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and provide technical support for four annual, three-day National SRF Infrastructure Financing and Training Workshops. The workshops will focus on SRF program officials and other interested stakeholders and should address new developments in the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF programs, such as the Justice40 initiative and BIL provisions including Buy America Build America Act (BABAA), while promoting best management practices (including strategic management), identifying environmental outputs and outcomes (improved water quality and

public health), and encouraging innovative approaches when dealing with the programmatic and financial aspects of each program.

The project elements described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicants may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage the National SRF Infrastructure Financing and Training Workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. However, the project elements described do support the application review and selection criteria in Section V.A. and may provide guidance as applicants decide what activities will be needed to successfully support the workshops. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional project elements that may not be included in the announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their applications.

The workshops will provide a forum for training in the programmatic, financial, and technical aspects of the SRF programs. Workshop participants will examine and discuss SRF management issues, and information and lessons learned by the states, EPA, and others interested in the programs will be exchanged. The training workshops should include innovative approaches to finance water infrastructure and reduce costs of infrastructure through SRF management. Other workshop topic areas addressed should include innovative approaches used by SRF programs to improve infrastructure system sustainability and resiliency (including climate change adaptation and mitigation), addressing non-point source pollution and failing decentralized wastewater systems, identifying and measuring environmental benefits achieved from wastewater infrastructure investment, and working with small, disadvantaged communities.

The training workshops should also help participants learn about the Justice40 initiative to understand how states implement their practices in achieving their Justice40 goals. Justice40 was established by President Biden through Executive Order 14008 and set a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities. More information on the Justice40 initiative is available at Justice40 Initiative - Environmental Justice - The White House. In addition, innovative approaches to incorporating the goals, policies, and information that address the priorities under the BIL for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, as referenced in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law SRF Memorandum | US EPA should be included in the workshops. BIL is a historic opportunity to upgrade environmental infrastructure and includes over $50 billion in water infrastructure investments, most of which is available through the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF programs.

Individuals from the state SRF programs are expected to attend, specifically those individuals dealing with the financial issues and environmental activities of the programs. Individuals from the financial community (bond brokers, banks, investment brokers) and EPA staff from Headquarters and the Regional Offices are also expected to attend. An estimated 300 to 350 participants are expected to attend each annual workshop, approximately 90 percent state/state advisors and 10 percent federal.

The successful applicants will provide the overall leadership for the workshops, select the locations for the annual workshops (geographically diverse locations acceptable to EPA), secure the workshop facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop

the workshop agendas and promotion materials, and select the speakers. EPA will support the workshops by providing technical assistance, workshop promotion, and review of workshop agendas and printed materials. The successful applicants will use their logos on workshop materials; EPA will use its logos on any workshop materials it provides. The successful applicants will be responsible for determining the registration fees, vendor, and exhibitor fees, and establishing and managing a waiver process of any fees for specific individuals (e.g., speakers, state officials, etc.).

Applicants should include in their description how they propose to deliver trainings in person under normal circumstances and how they will deliver the trainings if in-person training is not possible due to impacts related to still present COVID-19 (e.g., under quarantine situations, if social distancing is required in your locale) conditions. Alternative trainings due to the impacts may include switching from in-person formats to online only or reducing the number of participants in each training to allow participants to be located six feet apart from each other.

In their applications, applicants should describe the technical approach to planning, preparing, and providing technical support for the four annual National SRF Infrastructure Financing and Training Workshops. The application should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The application should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to states, local governments, and other interested stakeholders.

Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

All eligible applications will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V of this announcement (see Section V). EPA anticipates awarding approximately one to three cooperative agreements under this announcement. It is anticipated that the project periods for awards will be four years. Each award is anticipated to be funded incrementally up to $150,000 per year, for total award amounts of $600,000 per award, depending on Agency priorities, available funding levels and satisfactory performance of the recipient. It is anticipated that the total amount of all awards made under this announcement will be approximately $1,800,000 in federal funds.

C. EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results

Applicants must demonstrate in their application how their project and proposed activities link to the Strategic Plan Goal and Objective identified below.

The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the FY 2022 –2026 EPA Strategic Plan Awards made under this solicitation support Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All

Communities: Provide clean and safe water for all communities and protect our nation's waterbodies from degradation. Objective 5.1: Ensure Safe Drinking Water and Reliable Water Infrastructure: Protect public health from the risk of exposure to regulated and emerging contaminants in drinking and source waters by improving the reliability, accessibility, and resilience of the nation's water infrastructure to reduce the impacts of climate change, structural deterioration, and cyber threats (available at: https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan).

EPA also requires that applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements). All proposed projects must address the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of improved public health and water quality and increasing the non-federal dollars leveraged by the EPA CWSRF and DWSRF water infrastructure finance programs.

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Expected 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 cooperative agreement(s) to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Identification of program innovations and best practices.
- Training workshops related to Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure Financing and associated logistical support and training materials.

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

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the cooperative agreement(s) expected to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- An increased awareness and knowledge of infrastructure financing resulting in improved utilization of funds provided through the SRF programs.
- Improved public health and water quality.

As part of the project narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. In addition, applicants will have to describe their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving expected outputs and outcomes. Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements.

D. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for the awards expected to be made under this announcement is, as appropriate, section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA authorizes EPA to make grants to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of training, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution.

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to sections III, IV, V, and VI of this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses. These provisions are important for applying to this solicitation and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact listed in this solicitation in Section VII to obtain the provisions.

F. 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

Section II. Award Information

A. Amount of Funding

The total amount of federal funding potentially available under this announcement is approximately $1,800,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that approximately one to three cooperative agreements will be made under this announcement. It is anticipated that the project period for the awards will be up to four years and that awards will be incrementally funded up to $150,000 per year for total award amounts of up to $600,000, depending on Agency priorities, available funding levels, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

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

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

B. Type of Funding

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

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 2 CFR §200.317 and 2 CFR §200.318, review of proposed procurements;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement(s) (the final decision on the content of these reports rests with the recipient).

EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

Section III. Eligibility Information

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

A. Eligible Applicants

In accordance with Assistance Listing 66.436, applicants under this competition are states, local governments, Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private institutions. Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. [1]Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. The statutory authority for this announcement is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). An intertribal consortium is a partnership between two or more tribes that is authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance. (See 40 CFR 35.502.) The intertribal consortium is eligible only if the consortium demonstrates that all of its members meet the eligibility requirements and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance in accordance with 40 CFR 35.504 at the time of application submission. An intertribal consortium must submit with its application to EPA adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the consortium by its members to apply for and receive the grant. (See 40 CFR 35.504.)

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No cost share or match is required under this announcement.

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

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[1] 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. For-profit colleges, universities, and trade schools 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.

2. Applications must be in compliance with CWA 104(b)(3) and must be for projects that improve water quality by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Implementation projects are NOT eligible for funding under this announcement.

3. Applications must **substantially comply** with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.C.2 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. Section IV.C.2 establishes a 13-page, single-spaced Project Narrative page limit.

4. 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 submitting 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.

5. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late 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.

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

Section IV. Grants.gov Submission Information

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

A. 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.

B. Submission Instructions

1. 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 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 Questions 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.

2. Grants.gov Registration Information

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.

3. 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 AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose Unique Entity Identifier (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.

4. Application Submission Deadline:

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than by **11:59 PM ET June 23, 2023**. 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.

C. 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 funding opportunity number, EPA-OW-OWM-23-01, in the subject line to **Josephs.Frances@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.

D. 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
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Project Narrative, prepared as described in Section IV.C.2 of the announcement

Optional Documents:
1. Other Attachments Form - Biographical Sketches: Submit biographical sketches of major project managers, support staff members, or other major project participants for the proposed project (See Section IV.C.2.C.5.b.).
2. Other Attachments Form - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of

the application deadline, please contact Frances Josephs, at Josephs.Frances@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

E. Content of Application Package Submission

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

1. Application Materials

a) **Signed Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance.** Complete the form. There are no attachments.

b) **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 (a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the total amount of indirect cost should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package. In Section B, Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for any non-federal cost- share/match, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (combined federal funds and any non-federal cost-share/match).

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

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

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

f) **Biographical Sketches.** Submit a biographical sketch of each major project manager, support staff member, or other major project participant for the proposed project (see Section IV.C.2.C.5.b).

g) **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** (if applicable). See EPA's Indirect Cost Guidance for additional information. You must submit a copy of your organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed project budget includes indirect costs.

2. Project Narrative

NOTE: The Project Narrative must include sections A-C below. The Project Narrative (covering sections A-C below) is limited to no more than thirteen (13) typewritten, single spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper) including the cover page and executive summary. Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the Project Narrative. **Additional pages beyond the 13-page limit will not be considered.** Supporting materials, such as biographical sketches and full resumes, are not included within the page limit.

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

A. Cover Page (included in the 13-page limit) including:

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

B. Executive Summary (included in the 13-page limit): Provide a brief summary of the proposed project (should not exceed one page). This should include a brief description of the proposed project and the anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes.

C. Work plan (included in the 13-page limit): The work plan must address the following elements:

1. **Technical Approach:** Describe the technical approach to planning, preparing, and providing technical support for the four annual National SRF Infrastructure Financing and Training Workshops as described in Section I.B of this announcement. The technical approach should include a description of the strategy for accomplishing the project elements in Section I.B and any additional project elements that are proposed as key features of the projects, to the extent applicable. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. If travel assistance is to be provided for non-federal attendees, describe the process for selecting non-federal attendees who may receive travel assistance.

2. **Environmental Results and Measuring Progress**:
   a. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - Describe the objective of the project and the linkage EPA's FY 2022 – FY 2026 Strategic Plan Goal 5 Objective 5.1. The description should include how the proposal will be a step towards the goal of

increasing the non-federal dollars leveraged by the EPA CWSRF and DWSRF water infrastructure finance programs (see Section I.C of this announcement).

b. Results of Activities (Outputs) - Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and describe an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement).

c. Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - Describe the environmental improvements that will be accomplished as a result of the project activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment or public health which are a result of the accomplishment of the work plan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement).

3. **Milestone Schedule:** Provide a projected milestone schedule for the proposed project period (estimated four-year project period). The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks and an approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant.

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

   a. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs and total cost. All sub-grant funding should be located in the "other" cost category. Participant support costs are captured in the "other" cost category and may include, for example, training fees or travel assistance for non-federal conference, training or workshop participants. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the allowability of costs for each project component/task, as well as the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs(both federal and any non-federally funded components). If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel of applicant employees. There is general guidance available to applicants when preparing proposed budgets which can be found on the Agency's General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance webpage and training on how to develop a budget.

5. **Transfer of Results:** Provide a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to states, local governments, and other interested stakeholders.

6. **Programmatic Capability/Experience/Community Support:**
   a. Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of your organization and experience related to the proposed project, and your organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
   b. Staff Expertise/Qualifications - Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their experience/expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Key staff include major project managers, support staff members, or other major project participants. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). If you choose to identify any partner organizations who will receive sub-awards or procurement contracts (including consultants) please refer to Section I.E., Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation, available at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses before doing so as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless you select them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. A biographical sketch must be submitted for each major project manager, support staff member or other major project participant. Biographical sketches are not counted in the page limit for the Project Narrative. Biographical sketches should be limited to two single-spaced pages. Full resumes may be included as an appendix to the application narrative and are not counted in the page limit for the Project Narrative.

7. **Past Performance:** Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and:
   a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
   b. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
   c. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

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

Note: The applicant should also provide in the Project Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already addressed above, that addresses the selection criteria in Section V.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be received by **11:59 PM ET June 23, 2023.** Late applications will not be considered for funding.

Section V. Application Review Information

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

A. Selection Criteria

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

Maximum Points per Criterion	Criterion
1) Technical Approach **(25 points)**	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the applicant proposes a technical approach to planning, preparing, and providing technical support for four annual National SRF Infrastructure Financing and Training Workshops as described in Section 1.B of this announcement.
2) Environmental Results and Measuring Progress **(20 points)**	Applicants will be evaluated based on each of the following sub-criteria: i. Environmental Results: The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan described in Section I.C. of this announcement. (10 points) ii. Measuring Progress: The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (10 points)

3) Milestone Schedule/Detailed Budget/Transfer of Results **(25 points)**	Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the application addresses each of the following sub-criteria: i. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy and completeness of the milestone schedule, including timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks, a plan for timely and successfully completing the proposed project, and an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (5 points) ii. The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget narrative and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. (10 points) iii. A description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to states, local governments, and other interested stakeholders. (10 points)
4) Programmatic Capability (Experience/Qualifications) **(20 points)**	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their**:** i. Organizational experience related to the proposed project and their infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (15 points) ii. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (5 points)

5) 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 the following: i. Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). (4 points) ii. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. (3 points) iii. Extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements),and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (3 points) Note: In evaluating applicants under (i), (ii) and (iii) above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and/or prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). 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 i, ii, and iii 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. Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factor

	(i.e., 0 points for item (i), 0 points for item (ii), and 0 points for item (iii)).

B. Review and Selection Process

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

A panel(s) comprised of EPA staff will review the eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. and will develop a ranking list of the applications based on the panel evaluations. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official(s) who make(s) the final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official(s) will consider the application score/ranking and may also take into consideration program priorities.

Section VI. Award Administration Information

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

A. Award Notification

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

Applicants are cautioned that only an Award Official is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA Award Official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the cooperative agreement can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a cooperative agreement can take up to 90 days or longer.

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

1. Components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each component;
3. Commitments for each component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and

5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the commitments.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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 quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 120 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the work plan consistent with 2 CFR 200 and 1500, and 40 CFR Part 45, as appropriate.

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 on the Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures (available at https://www.epa.gov/grants/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, the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

Section VII. Agency Contact

Note to Applicants: In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about any of the language or provisions in the announcement. Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in Section VII of this announcement as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting a proposal. In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination.

Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **11:59 PM ET, June 8, 2023**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/srf-training-workshop-support.

Applicants deemed ineligible as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application via e-mail as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

Agency Contact: Frances Josephs
Josephs.Frances@epa.gov

Section VIII. Other Information

A. Data Sharing

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