FEDERAL AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: FY 2021-22 Region 7 Healthy, Resilient, and Sustainable Materials Management Grant

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001(a)(5), 42 U.S.C. Section 6981 (a)(5)

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications

ASSISTANCE LISTING: 66.808

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-R7-LCRD-2021

IMPORTANT DATES:

Request for Applications Issuance:	March 19, 2021
Application Deadline:	May 3, 2021
Anticipated Notification of Selection(s):	June 15, 2021
Anticipated Award:	September 30, 2021

COVID-19 Update: The 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 the EPA's Solicitation Clauses (https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses).

Applications are due by Monday, May 3, 2021 at 11:59 pm Eastern Time in order to be considered for funding. Application packages must be submitted electronically to the EPA through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/). Applications will be electronically dated and time stamped. Please refer to Section IV and Appendix A of this announcement for full information on the submission process. Late applications will not be considered, unless they meet an exception specified in Appendix A.

SUMMARY OF ANNOUNCEMENT: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7 (EPA) is issuing a Request for Applications (RFA) from eligible entities to address at least one (1) of the EPA's Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Key Pillars and Program Focus Areas identified in Section I.C. Applications must demonstrate the SMM benefit to states, tribes, and/or communities within Region 7, which includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska.

The total amount of federal funding potentially available under this announcement is approximately $600,000 (up to $300,000 in FY 2021 funds and up to $300,000 in FY 2022 funds based on anticipated funding, which is not guaranteed and may change). The number and dollar amount of awards issued is contingent upon funding availability (e.g., Congressional appropriations), satisfactory performance, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. The EPA anticipates making three to six (3-6) individual awards ranging from $50,000 to $200,000, each with a project period of up to two (2) years. Awards will be incrementally funded in FY 2021 and FY 2022 subject to funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read this announcement in its entirety because it provides important information on the goals and priorities of the program, explains statutory program requirements, and offers Agency grant policies and procedures.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION 5
A. Program Goals & Objectives 5
B. Statutory Authority 5
C. Scope of Work 6
1. SMM Key Pillars: Source Reduction, Reuse, & Recycling 6
2. SMM Program Focus Areas 8
D. Linkage to the EPA's Strategic Plan 10
E. Measuring & Reporting: Output & Outcome Performance Measures 10
1. Outputs 10
2. Outcomes 11
F. Applicant Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion 11
SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION 12
A. Number of Expected Awards & Funding Amounts 12
B. Partial Funding 12
C. Agreement Types 12
SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION 13
A. Eligible Applicants 13
B. Cost Sharing & Matching Requirements 14
C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria 14
SECTION IV. APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION 15
A. Application Submission Deadline 15
B. Content, Format, & Instructions for Preparing an Application Package 15
1. Mandatory Documents 15
2. Optional Attachments 16
3. Project Narrative 16
C. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation 18
SECTION V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION 18
A. Evaluation Criteria 18
B. Review & Selection Process 21
C. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation 21
SECTION VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION 21
A. Award Notification 21
B. Submission Requirements 22

C. Administrative & National Policy Requirements 22
1. Award Management 22
2. Quality Assurance/Quality Control 22
3. Reporting 22
D. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation 23
SECTION VII. AGENCY CONTACTS 23
APPENDIX A. GRANTS.GOV INSTRUCTIONS & LIMITED EXCEPTION PROCEDURES 24
A. Application Submission Requirements & Limited Exception Procedures 24
B. Application Submission Instructions 25
C. Technical Submission Issues 26
D. Transmission Difficulties 26

SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Program Goals & Objectives

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7 (EPA) is soliciting applications from eligible entities to improve community health, resiliency, and sustainability through source reduction, reuse, and recycling, key pillars of the EPA's Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) hierarchy. SMM (https://www.epa.gov/smm) is a systemic approach to using materials more productively over their life cycles. It represents a change in how our society thinks about the use of natural resources and environmental protection. By looking at a product's life cycle, we can find new opportunities to reduce environmental impacts, conserve resources, and reduce costs.

SMM can build community health, resiliency, and sustainability by:

- Reducing the use, release, and exposure to toxic chemicals;
- Implementing life cycle approaches to reduce the health and environmental impacts of materials use;
- Employing upstream solutions that reduce the need and cost of environmental cleanup and pollution management;
- Reducing the demand for virgin, raw materials;
- Increasing the efficiency of materials use and reuse;
- Creating opportunities for in-process recycling and the innovative reuse of materials;
- Fostering systems in which materials, like edible food and building materials, are used for their best and highest purpose;
- Reducing contamination in the recycling stream;
- Increasing recycling processing efficiency; and
- Improving and developing markets for recycled materials.

Under this announcement, the EPA is seeking to fund projects that demonstrate: 1) a commitment to support SMM efforts, particularly those that move towards source reduction; 2) SMM implementation after EPA funding for the project has ended; and 3) projects that are replicable by other entities and in other locations. The EPA is especially interested in projects that support and/or align with a state/local government or community mandate, policy, and/or priority to improve community health, resiliency, and sustainability through source reduction, reuse, and recycling.

The EPA encourages applicants to work in collaboration with appropriate partners to implement the project effectively and efficiently and coordinate with other related projects or activities being performed by the applicant or others. Partnerships strengthen projects by increasing stakeholder support, information dissemination, positive environmental impacts, and replicability. They will be evaluated as part of the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A.

B. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for this action is the Solid Waste Disposal Act (SWDA), Section 8001(a)(5), 42 U.S.C. Section 6981(a)(5). The SWDA authorizes grants and cooperative agreements for research, investigation, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, public education programs, and studies relating to the reduction of the amount of solid waste and unsalvageable waste materials.

Applications selected for funding under this announcement must specify how the project fits into the statutory authority and be consistent with the authorized activities above. Demonstrations must

involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches where the results of the project will be disseminated so others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project.

C. Scope of Work

This Request for Applications (RFA) solicits projects that address at least one (1) of the three (3) EPA SMM Key Pillars – source reduction, reuse, and recycling – and one (1) of the SMM Program Focus Areas outlined in this section: Sustainable Management of Food, Built Environment, Sustainable Packaging, and Prevention of Escaped Trash and Litter. Applications that do not address at least one (1) of the SMM Key Pillars and Program Focus Areas are ineligible and will not be reviewed.

Applications must demonstrate the SMM benefit to states, tribes, and/or communities within Region 7, which includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska.

Please note that under this announcement, federal funds may not be used to purchase recycling equipment or infrastructure, such as collection bins and trucks.

1. SMM Key Pillars: Source Reduction, Reuse, & Recycling

Source reduction, also known as pollution prevention, means reducing waste at the source, and is the most environmentally preferable SMM strategy. It can take many different forms, including reusing or donating items, buying in bulk, reducing packaging, redesigning products, or reducing toxicity. Source reduction is also important in manufacturing. Light-weighting of packaging, reuse, and remanufacturing are all becoming more popular business trends. Purchasing products that incorporate these features also supports source reduction. Source reduction can save natural resources, conserve energy, reduce pollution, reduce the toxicity of our waste, and save money for consumers and businesses alike.

Material recovery and reuse maintain products in their original form and use the embodied energy, resources, and impacts already incurred in the production of the original products. This is in contrast to recycling, which is a series of activities that includes collecting used, reused, or unused items that would otherwise be considered waste; sorting and processing the recyclable products into raw materials; and remanufacturing the recycled raw materials into new products. While products produced with recycled content are typically preferable to manufacturing from virgin resources, reuse offers significantly greater potential for conserving resources and reducing pollution.

Recycling is also a critical component of the EPA's SMM approach. In November 2020, the EPA announced its National Recycling Goal (https://www.epa.gov/americarecycles/us-national-recycling-goal) to increase recycling to 50 percent by 2030. To do this, the EPA drafted three (3) objectives: 1) Reduce contamination in recycling; 2) Make our recycling processing system more efficient; and 3) Strengthen the economic markets for recycled materials. Reducing contamination in the recycling stream allows more materials to be recycled and can result in less discarded and higher quality recycled materials produced for manufacturing feedstock. Investment and innovation are needed to increase the efficiency of material processing infrastructure and create more resilient

recycling systems. There is also a need to improve domestic markets for recyclable materials and products and to better integrate recycled materials into product and packaging designs.

Project examples for source reduction, reuse, and recycling include, but are not limited to:

- Provide technical assistance to businesses for developing and adopting source reduction practices;
- Develop or promote site-specific source reduction assessments to help businesses prioritize which environmental problems to address and in which order;
- Conduct workshops/forums for businesses and stakeholders to share best practices or demonstrate a technology that supports and/or enhances source reduction;
- Establish events to repair and reuse items (e.g., clothing, textiles, appliances, furniture);
- Design a campaign to promote the procurement and use of safer cleaners and disinfectants at local businesses;
- Assist businesses in developing green cleaning policies and procedures;
- Design or educate on disposal programs for residential/household hazardous waste and pesticides and the recycling of pesticide containers;
- Create education and outreach materials on reducing pesticide wastes through sustainable pest management strategies for schools, public health facilities, or other facilities housing vulnerable populations to include biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools;
- Identify effective ways to educate the public about recycling and test methods via pilot educational campaigns using e.g., community-based social marketing (CBSM), which emphasizes direct contact amongst community members to remove structural barriers and inspire behavior change;
- Generate recycling messaging and educational materials, such fact sheets and infographics, on key issues to promote awareness of environmental, social, and economic benefits, increase recycling participation, and ensure a more consistent stream of recyclable material;
- Enlist the assistance of traditional and social media, governments, and product manufacturers to disseminate messaging campaigns (e.g., toolkits, direct mailers, “oops” cart tags, and brochures);
- Create toolkits for best practices on policies, programs, funding opportunities, and outreach through a free, publicly accessible online clearinghouse;
- Improve consistency of labels for recyclable products, recycling bins, and trash cans;
- Develop a map of existing recycling infrastructure that includes key elements of the recycling system, from available collection points (e.g., drop-off centers, scrap yards, Material Recovery Facilities [MRFs]), sortation and secondary processing facilities (e.g., MRFs, baling operations, scrap yards, plastics reclaimers, pulp mills, glass beneficiation facilities), and ultimately remanufacturing centers (e.g., plastic/products manufacturers, paper/paperboard mills, steel/aluminum mills, glass product/packaging manufacturers);
- Conduct a needs assessment of the community, state, or region’s recycling infrastructure;
- Analyze different state and local policies that could address recycling challenges;
- Research and develop new technologies and processes that result in environmental gains from improvements in manufacturing and processing efficiencies;
- Design new products that consider the recycling sorting process to increase efficiency;
- Identify gaps in managing materials, reducing waste, and advancing equity across SMM (e.g., recycling, waste collection, disposal), with emphasis on historically underserved communities in both urban and rural areas; and

- Use EPA science and research tools to enhance projects and identify actions communities and businesses can take to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials, plan for and integrate climate-friendly, resilient infrastructure, prevent trash and litter, and engage underserved communities. Examples include the Materials Management Wizard, SMM Prioritization Tools, Excess Food Opportunities Map, EnviroAtlas, and EJSCREEN. For more information, check out the EPA's research website at: https://www.epa.gov/research.

2. SMM Program Focus Areas

a. Sustainable Management of Food

Currently 30-40 percent of all available food in the U.S. goes uneaten. When wholesome, edible food ends up in a landfill, embedded natural resources, along with money, time, and labor spent to get them from farm to plate, are wasted. This impacts the environment, our communities, and the economy. Led by an interagency agreement, the EPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration are working with communities, organizations, and businesses along with partners in state, tribal, and local government to reduce food loss and waste by 50 percent over the next 10 years as identified in the U.S. 2030 Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal (https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/united-states-2030-food-loss-and-waste-reduction-goal). In order to address these challenges, the EPA is requesting applications for projects that leverage ongoing state-wide, multi-agency, or regional initiatives to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to prevent wasted food and/or divert wasted food from landfills in Region 7. Projects should build on the principles outlined in the EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy (https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy) and demonstrate progress to reaching the U.S. 2030 Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal.

Please note that under this announcement, federal funds may not be used for anaerobic digestion or other energy-related projects.

Project examples under this focus area include, but are not limited to:

- Increase awareness of the environmental, social, and economic benefits of reducing wasted food;
- Develop and implement a local outreach campaign for food service businesses appropriate to current industry challenges including food safety, donation liability, and tax deduction;
- Advance food loss and waste by focusing on at least one (1) of the following contributing sectors: consumer, restaurant, and/or grocery;
- Improve data quality and collection on the topic of food loss and waste;
- Encourage the development of infrastructure to effectively divert excess safe and healthy food from going to the landfill with an emphasis on feeding people and animals;
- Test innovative approaches or scale up proven models that advance the safe recovery and distribution of nutritious, perishable food;
- Work with local health departments to promote food donation safety and technical guidance on websites and during food purveyor inspections; and
- Promote new methods for reducing the environmental impact of food waste by moving excess food management pathways up the EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy to be used for its' "highest purpose."

b. Built Environment

The Built Environment is an EPA program that promotes an SMM approach to reducing waste and

reuse and recycling of materials generated during the construction, renovation, and demolition of buildings, roads, and bridges. The EPA identifies certain construction and demolition (C&D) materials as commodities that can be used in new building projects, thus avoiding the need to mine and process virgin materials. C&D materials are generated when new building and civil engineering structures are built and when existing buildings and civil engineering structures are renovated or demolished (including deconstruction activities). Civil engineering structures include public works projects, such as streets and highways, bridges, utility plants, piers, and dams. C&D materials often contain bulky, heavy materials such as concrete, wood, asphalt, bricks, and other energy-intensive resources.

Project examples under this focus area include, but are not limited to:

- Research and pilot studies for the beneficial reuse of industrial non-hazardous secondary materials as replacements for virgin materials in construction (e.g., coal ash, foundry sand, iron, steel slag; https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-management-industrial-non-hazardous-secondarymaterials);
- Develop new methods of reusing or recycling hard to recycle materials, such as wind turbines, solar panels, treated wood, railroad ties, and Polyvinylchloride (PVC) plastics;
- Look to reuse materials and prioritize deconstruction practices vs. demolition in community development, renovations, and redevelopment (https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainablemanagement-construction-and-demolition-materials);
- Develop best practices for reducing, reusing, and recycling C&D materials in all types of building, infrastructure, and redevelopment projects (https://www.epa.gov/smm/best-practices-reducing-reusing-and-recycling-construction-anddemolition-materials); and
- Design strategies for managing debris generated during natural disasters that diverts valuable materials from landfills and burning.

c. Sustainable Packaging

Packaging materials are some of the most ubiquitous and easily recognizable items people use in their daily lives. Packaging includes plastic bottles, metal cans, food wrappings, corrugated cardboard boxes, and many more materials. Understanding the production and disposal of these materials is crucial in making economic and environmentally conscious decisions.

Project examples under this focus area include, but are not limited to:

- Develop methods to reduce the generation of packaging waste;
- Research and analyze packaging design or process innovations (e.g., reusable packaging, zero packaging, supply chains, behavior changes);
- Evaluate improved approaches to the collection, recycling, or marketing of commonly and less commonly recycled plastics, such as agricultural plastics;
- Address known problems and knowledge gaps in relation to plastic packaging (including flexible film), working with project partners and actors from across the supply chain;
- Distribute information to public/private buyers of materials or products about buying packaging products manufactured with recycled content; and
- Develop methods to improve market information and/or connections between markets (e.g., different geographic locations or industries) for recovered packaging products.

d. Prevention of Escaped Trash & Litter

Region 7 is geographically situated within the two largest river systems in the U.S., the Missouri River and the Mississippi River. Protecting these river systems and their tributaries is a priority for the EPA. SMM can help reduce and prevent trash and litter on land and in waters (e.g., the Missouri River and the Mississippi River) through innovative projects that address source reduction and infrastructure.

Project examples under this focus area include, but are not limited to:

- Develop preventative measures and tracking methods with local businesses, industries, and state and local governments to reduce the amount of trash and litter that is polluting lands and waters;
- Conduct litter mapping in a community impacted by legacy trash and litter and use data to identify hot spots and actions to reduce/prevent litter, illegal dumping, and/or trash leakage;
- Design and/or install stormwater collection devices (e.g., trash traps) in trash/litter-impacted waters. These should be used to study materials entering local waterways, provide education and awareness, and develop source reduction actions to prevent materials from entering nearby waterways;
- Develop education and outreach campaigns to improve public understanding of the connection between land and water (e.g., how trash in inland waters can make its way to major rivers, seas, and oceans; the importance of keeping storm drains, roadways, public spaces, schools, parking lots, and construction sites free from trash and litter); and
- Investigate behavior change strategies in areas impacted by trash and litter.

D. Linkage to the EPA's Strategic Plan

The activities to be funded under this solicitation support EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this solicitation will support Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment, Objective 1.1 Improve Air Quality; Objective 1.2 Provide for Clean and Safe Water; Objective 1.3 Revitalize Land and Prevent Contamination; and Objective 1.4 Ensure Safety of Chemicals in the Marketplace; and Goal 2: More Effective Partnerships, Objective 2.1 Enhance Shared Accountability; and Objective 2.2: Increase Transparency and Public Participation of the EPA Strategic Plan. All applications must be for projects that support the goals and objectives identified above.

E. Measuring & Reporting: Output & Outcome Performance Measures

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7a1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," the EPA requires that assistance agreement applicants and recipients describe expected environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved. These are further defined below. Applicants must provide an estimate of expected outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, outcomes, as well as a plan for tracking progress and reporting outputs and outcomes during the award period. It is recommended that applicants include a footnote or citation referencing the source (e.g., calculator, model) used to estimate anticipated outcomes.

1. Outputs

An output is an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to a goal and/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. Expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement may

include the following: meetings, conference calls, training sessions, or other measurable efforts towards an environmental goal. Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI.C.3 of this announcement.

Examples of outputs include, but are not limited to:

- Number of businesses and/or other entities that were provided technical assistance;
- Number of source reduction recommendations made to businesses and/or other entities;
- Number of stakeholder groups involved in the process;
- Number of attendees at training/demonstration projects, webinars, or roundtables;
- Number of outreach materials created/circulated (e.g., fact sheets, social media posts, case studies);
- Pounds/tons of materials recovered through projects with e.g., schools, businesses, and institutions aimed at reducing wasted materials and diverting from disposal;
- Number of businesses who have made commitments to increasing material(s) recovery; and
- Number of deconstruction projects implemented.

2. Outcomes

An outcome is the result, effect, or consequence that occurs from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to a goal and/or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- Reduction in pounds/tons of solid waste going to landfill;
- Reduction in gallons of water used;
- Conservation of natural resources;
- Improved air, water, and/or land quality;
- Cost savings associated with achieving reductions in e.g., water or energy use, including savings from reduced regulatory burden and those saved through recycling and/or reuse efforts; and
- Other economic benefits, including jobs created and/or retained.

F. Applicant Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces, while continuing to build scientific, technical, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) competence. At the same time, the EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation by including members of communities which may have not previously participated or been underrepresented in such dialogues to participate in EPA programs. For this reason, the EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III.A, including minority serving institutions (MSIs), to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this announcement, the following are considered MSIs:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), 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;

- 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;
- 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;
- 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
- 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. Number of Expected Awards & Funding Amounts

The EPA anticipates awarding up to $600,000 under this announcement (up to $300,000 in FY 2021 funds and up to $300,000 in FY 2022 funds based on anticipated funding, which is not guaranteed and may change). The number and dollar amount of awards issued are contingent upon funding availability (e.g., Congressional appropriations), satisfactory performance, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. The EPA anticipates making three to six (3-6) individual awards ranging from $50,000 to $200,000, each with a project period of up to two (2) years. Awards will be incrementally funded in FY 2021 and FY 2022 subject to funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations. If necessary, project periods can be extended.

The EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards or fewer awards than anticipated under this announcement. In addition, the EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six (6) months after the original selection decisions. All awards will be consistent with applicable EPA regulations and grant policies.

B. Partial Funding

In appropriate circumstances, the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If the 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.

C. Agreement Types

Successful applicant(s) will be issued a grant or cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. The EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the recipient's performance of the project. The EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the

performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements, reviewing qualifications of key personnel, and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. The 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

A. Eligible Applicants

Consistent with the Applicant Eligibility Section of Assistance Listing 66.808, applications will be accepted from states, local governments, county governments, tribal governments, interstate and intrastate government agencies and instrumentalities, public educational institutions, and non-profit organizations that are not 501(c)(4) organizations that lobby, including non-profit educational institutions and non-profit hospitals.

Non-profit organization, as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that: 1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; 2) is not organized primarily for profit; and 3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations.

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 non-profit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of non-profit at 2 CFR 200.1 are also eligible to apply as non-profits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible.

Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible for funding under this opportunity.

Additionally, 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. Eligible non-profit organizations must have documentation of non-profit status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service or their state of incorporation.

Groups of two (2) or more eligible applicants may choose to form a partnership and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one (1) eligible applicant must be responsible for the assistance agreement. Partnerships must identify which eligible organization will be the award recipient and which organization(s) will be subawardees of the recipient. Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR 200.1. The recipient must administer the assistance agreement, will be accountable to the EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 CFR 200.332, subawardees are accountable to the recipient for proper use of EPA funding. Please review the EPA's Subaward Policy (https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients) for subaward requirements, guidance, and training.

B. Cost Sharing & Matching Requirements

This competition does not require matching funds or cost sharing.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Each application must meet the threshold eligibility criteria provided below at the time of submission in order to be considered for funding. Only applications from eligible entities (Section III.A) that meet all threshold criteria will be scored against the evaluation criteria in Section V.A of this announcement. 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. Applications deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

- Applications must adhere to and address the statutory authority – Section I.B.
- Applications must address at least one (1) of the SMM Key Pillars and Program Focus Areas – see Section I.C.
- Applications must describe how the work will link to the goals and objectives of the EPA's Strategic Plan and support expected outputs and outcomes – Section I.D and Section I.E.
- The applicant must be an eligible entity and support work that benefits Region 7 states, tribes, and/or communities – Section III.A.
- Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV and Appendix A of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.B.3 with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
- In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov) as stated in Section IV and Appendix A of this announcement (except in limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Appendix A) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV.A of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV and Appendix A of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.
- Applications 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 EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov (https://www.sam.gov/SAM) system issues, as described in Appendix A. An applicant's failure to timely submit the application through Grants.gov because the applicant 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 application with Gayle Hubert at (913) 551-7439 or hubert.gayle@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline – failure to do so may result in the application not being reviewed.
- If an applicant submits more than one (1) application for an identical project (either in error or to replace a previously submitted application), the EPA will only review the most recently submitted application, unless the applicant notifies Gayle Hubert at (913) 551-7439 or hubert.gayle@epa.gov and specifies which application should be reviewed.

SECTION IV. APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Application Submission Deadline

The deadline to submit an application is Monday, May 3, 2021 at 11:59 pm Eastern Time. In order to apply, the applicant's Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must submit a complete application package electronically to the EPA through Grants.gov. Instructions for applying through Grants.gov are provided in Appendix A of this announcement.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be electronically dated and time stamped. If the applicant has not received a confirmation of receipt from the EPA (not Grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact the EPA representative listed in Section VII. Failure to do so may result in the application not being reviewed.

Prior to applying through Grants.gov, the applicant must:

- Designate an AOR as the individual submitting the application through Grants.gov;
- Have an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) (e.g., a Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number);
- Have an active System for Award Management (SAM) account; and
- Be registered in Grants.gov.

Note: The registration process for applying through Grants.gov may take a month or more to complete. Please start the registration process early and allow for enough time to successfully submit an application in the event unexpected errors require resubmission. The electronic submission of an application must be made by the AOR of the organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for federal funding assistance.

If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of limited or no Internet access which prevents the applicant from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, please refer to the procedures for an alternate submission exception request in Appendix A.

B. Content, Format, & Instructions for Preparing an Application Package

Please submit the application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package accessed using the instructions in Section IV.A and Appendix A.

1. Mandatory Documents

Applicants must use the forms available for download directly from Grants.gov:

- Standard Form 424: *Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)*
  - When filling out this form, applicants must provide a DUNS number. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the toll-free DUNS Number request line at (866) 705-5711 or visiting D&B's website: https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/.
- Standard Form 424A: *Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)*
  - Prepare the form as indicated to document the project budget details.
- EPA Form 4700-4: *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants Requesting Federal Financial Assistance*
  - Prepare the form as indicated.
- EPA Form 5700-54: *Key Contacts*
  - Identify personnel who will file/manage paperwork, fund activities, and direct work.

- Project Narrative, including cover page
    - Prepare as described below in Section IV.B.3.

2. Optional Attachments

The following documentation, while not required, can be submitted by applicants:

- Partner Letters of Support
    - Describe service(s) to be provided to help carry out and enhance the project.
- Staff resumes
    - Reflect the knowledge, experience, and/or expertise to conduct the proposed work.
- Graphs or tables of project budgets and timelines
    - Provide an illustrative example of milestones for completing proposed work.

3. Project Narrative

The project narrative must describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-III (including the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C) and address all evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.A of this announcement.

The project narrative, including the cover page, must not exceed 12 single-spaced pages, with a minimum font size of 11, one-inch margins, and page numbers. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size requirements, applicants are advised that readability is of utmost importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the application. Any pages submitted in excess of the page limit will not be reviewed. Supporting materials, as described above in Section IV.B.2, can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 12-page limit.

a. Cover Page

The following should be included in the project narrative's cover page. It is recommended for this not to exceed one (1) page.

- Funding Opportunity Title and Number;
- Project Title;
- Project Period (e.g., start and end dates);
- Total Project Cost and Funding Requested from the EPA;
- Contact Information (e.g., applicant name, organization name, mailing address, phone number, fax number, e-mail address);
- DUNS Number; and
- SAM Registration Date.

b. Project Narrative Elements

The following is the recommended approach for organizing the project narrative and items to include in it.

- **Project Goal Statement**: Provide an introductory goal statement (2-3 sentences) summarizing how the project addresses at least one (1) of the SMM Key Pillars and Program Focus Areas (Section I.C).
- **Linkage to the EPA's Strategic Plan**: Identify and explain how the project is linked to the EPA's Strategic Plan goals and objectives (Section I.D).
- **Estimate of Expected Outputs and Outcomes**: Provide an estimate of expected outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, outcomes (Section I.E).

- **Linkage to the Evaluation Criteria**: Identify and explain how the project addresses all the evaluation criteria and reference the criteria number and title. The evaluation criteria are summarized below, but please refer to Section V.A for the complete description of the evaluation criteria that must be addressed in this section of the project narrative.
    - **Project Summary** – Describe what will be done, why it will be done, how it will be done, and an estimate of how long it will take to complete each task. Provide a detailed project description and workplan; identify which SMM Key Pillar(s) and Program Focus Area(s) and EPA Strategic Plan goal(s) and objective(s) are addressed (Section I.C and Section I.D) and the alignment with a state, local, and/or community priority; describe the anticipated environmental and/or human health concerns and how the project helps address them; describe how the project includes other partners; describe how the project sparks creativity and innovation within SMM Key Pillars and Program Focus Areas; describe how project results will be disseminated and provide benefit to others inside and outside of Region 7.

      Note: If the proposed project will involve contract(s) and/or subaward(s), applicants are strongly advised to consult the applicable provisions for using contracts and subawards in federal assistance agreements, which can be found in the EPA's Solicitation Clauses (https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses).

    - **Environmental Results, Measurement, and Reporting** – Provide a comprehensive overview of the anticipated project outputs and outcomes and a plan for and statement of commitment to reporting, as described in Section I.E. Also, describe the plan and approach for tracking and measuring progress towards achieving outputs and outcomes.
    - **Timeline** – Provide project timeframes and milestones for completing project tasks and reporting deliverables (e.g., outputs, outcomes).
    - **Budget** – Explain budget tasks and applicable categories. Breakdown how federal and additional funding (if any) will be spent and itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Refer to https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02 for budget guidance.

      Note: Explaining the project's budget details is separate from and a supplement to submitting Standard Form 424A: Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (this form is noted in Section IV.B.1). Budget explanations are required in order to inform the EPA how budget plans justify funding the proposed project(s). For this reason, budget explanations must be included within the application's project narrative.

    - **Past Performance and Programmatic Capability** – Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that the applicant's organization performed within the last three (3) years (no more than five (5) agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe: i) whether and how it was able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and ii) its history of meeting the reporting

requirements under those agreements including whether it adequately and timely reported on progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether it submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, the EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and the applicant will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, the applicant may receive a score of zero (0) for these factors.

In addition, provide information on the applicant's organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

C. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this announcement and/or awards made under this RFA, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found in the EPA's Solicitation Clauses (https://www.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 applications for this announcement. If the applicant is unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in Section VII to obtain the provisions.

SECTION V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Only eligible entities whose application(s) meet the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C of this announcement will be reviewed and scored based upon the following evaluation criteria and points-scale system. The maximum possible score is 100 points. As part of the project narrative (Section IV.B.3), applicants must include clear, concise, and factual responses to all evaluation criteria. Project narratives must provide enough detail to allow for an evaluation of the merits of the application. Project narratives should reference the criterion number and title but need not restate the entire text of the criterion.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Description	Points
1. Project Summary	a. Project Description – The quality and extent to which the project is defined and uses well-conceived, creative strategies to improve community health, resiliency, and sustainability.	10 points
	b. Scope of Work, Strategic Plan, and Community Priority Linkage – The quality and extent to which the project addresses at least one (1) of the SMM	5 points

	Key Pillars and Program Focus Areas (Section I.C) and EPA Strategic Plan goals and objectives (Section I.D) and aligns with a state/local government or community mandate, policy, and/or priority.	
	c. Environmental and/or Human Health Concern – The quality and extent to which the applicant addresses the anticipated environmental and/or human health concerns related to the area of interest and how the project could help improve or resolve them.	5 points
	d. Project Workplan – The quality and extent to which the applicant provides a clear and detailed workplan, including project tasks and subtasks, key personnel roles and responsibilities, milestones, and anticipated outputs and outcomes.	20 points
	e. Collaboration and Partnerships – The quality and extent to which the applicant describes a plan to include other partners and stakeholders in the project, including a description of how each partner will contribute to the project's success. If the applicant does not demonstrate such partnerships, it must be able to convincingly demonstrate in its application how it will effectively perform and complete the project without such collaboration. Given the nature of this program, failure to demonstrate effective partnerships or collaboration with other stakeholders will likely adversely impact the applicant's scoring under this criterion and render the application less competitive than others that include partnerships and collaboration.	5 points
	f. SMM Impact – The quality and extent to which the applicant communicates the capacity to institute real change in the framework of the SMM Key Pillar(s) and Program Focus Area(s) addressed.	5 points
	g. Amplification and Transferability – The quality and extent to which the applicant describes a plan and commitment to widely share project deliverables, best practices, and lessons learned to other stakeholders in Region 7 and beyond and encourage replicability.	5 points
2. Environmental Results, Measurement, and Reporting	a. Outputs and Outcomes – The quality and extent to which the applicant describes anticipated project outputs and outcomes and a plan for and commitment to communicating and reporting results (Section I.E).	10 points
	b. Tracking and Measuring Progress – The quality and extent to which the applicant articulates a clear plan	5 points

	for tracking and measuring progress towards achieving project outputs and outcomes (Section I.E).	
3. Timeline	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the time schedule set forth for executing project tasks. The timeline must account for requested funding over the entire project period. The timeline must include a breakout of project tasks, anticipated dates (from start to completion of each task), milestone markers, material development, and a brief explanation for achieving project goals and objectives by the end of the project.	5 points
4. Budget	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The proposed costs must be eligible, appropriate, reasonable, and realistic to implement the project and clearly correlate with the proposed tasks and activities. The budget must account for requested funding over the entire project period. Each budget year should include estimated costs for each project task and category (e.g., labor, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractors, and other direct or indirect costs). Applicants should itemize costs associated with each project task and identify activities and corresponding estimated costs.	10 points
5. Past Performance and Programmatic Capability	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, considering their (see note below):	
	a. Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV of this announcement.	3 points
	b. History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in Section IV of this announcement, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not.	3 points
	c. Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project.	3 points
	d. Staff expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the proposed project's goals.	6 points
Note: In evaluating applicants under items a and b of this criterion, the EPA will consider		

the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and the applicant will receive a neutral score for these factors (items a and b above; a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, the applicant may receive a score of zero (0) for these factors.

B. Review & Selection Process

All applications received by the submission deadline will first be screened by the EPA using the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C. Applications that do not pass the threshold eligibility review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding. Applications meeting the threshold eligibility criteria will be reviewed through a regional review process by an EPA panel, including SMM program staff. Applications will be evaluated, scored, and ranked based on the criteria and points-scale system provided in Section V.A. The review panel will then recommend applications for funding to the Regional Selection Official for final funding decisions. The Regional Selection Official may also consider geographic diversity, programmatic priorities, project diversity amongst SMM Key Pillars and Program Focus Areas (Section I.C), and funding availability in making selection decisions. After final selection(s) and funding decisions are made, funding recommendations will be forwarded to the Region 7 Grants Office.

C. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this announcement and/or awards made under this RFA, including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance, can be found in the EPA's Solicitation Clauses (https://www.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 applications for this announcement. If the applicant is unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in Section VII to obtain the provisions.

SECTION VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notification

Following the EPA's evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified of their status. The EPA anticipates notification to successful applicant(s) will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by Tuesday, June 15, 2021. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the Region 7 Grants Office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of the EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by the EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

The EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail within 15 days after successful applicant(s) are notified. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or to the project contact listed in the application.

B. Submission Requirements

All application forms must be filled out in their entirety, prior to being considered for an award (refer to 2 CFR Part 200, as applicable). Successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been debarred or suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 2 CFR Part 180.

C. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at https://www.epa.gov/grants/policy-regulations-and-guidance-epa-grants.

1. Award Management

Awards are expected to be issued in FY 2021 and managed by the EPA.

2. Quality Assurance/Quality Control

Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) requirements are applicable to these assistance agreements (see 2 CFR 1500.12). 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. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. The EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Please reach out to the Region 7 contact listed in Section VII for referral to EPA QA/QC staff.

3. Reporting

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the grant or cooperative agreement to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Electronically submitted semi-annual progress reports and a detailed final technical closeout report will be required. Semi-annual reports should summarize technical progress (including outputs and outcomes), upcoming planned activities, and expenditures to date. A schedule for submitting semi-annual reports will be established by the EPA. The final technical closeout report shall be completed within 120 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report should include a summary of the project activities, milestones and results achieved, costs of the project, and a description of the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project that could help overcome structural, organizational, or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The final report should also describe the transferability of the project's tools and approaches after the project period. Please also be aware of continuing obligations to report in accordance with the requirements described in 2 CFR 180.335 and 2 CFR 180.350.

D. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this announcement and/or awards made under this RFA, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, debriefings, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found in the EPA's Solicitation Clauses (https://www.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 applications for this announcement. If the applicant is unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in Section VII to obtain the provisions.

SECTION VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Gayle Hubert
U.S. EPA Region 7 (Mail Code: LCRD-BSPR)
11201 Renner Blvd.
Lenexa, KS 66219
Phone: (913) 551-7439
E-mail: hubert.gayle@epa.gov

APPENDIX A. GRANTS.GOV INSTRUCTIONS & LIMITED EXCEPTION PROCEDURES

A. Application Submission Requirements & Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the 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 OMS-ARM-OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, e-mail) 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:	**Courier Address:**
OGD Waivers c/o Jessica Durand U.S. EPA Headquarters William Jefferson Clinton Building 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Mail Code: 3903R Washington, DC 20460	OGD Waivers c/o Jessica Durand Ronald Reagan Building 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Room # 51278 Washington, DC 20004

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

- Funding Opportunity Number – EPA-R7-LCRD-2021;
- Organization's Name and DUNS Number;
- Organization's Contact Information (e-mail address and phone number); and
- Explanation of how it lacks the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of: 1) limited Internet access; or 2) no Internet access, which prevents it from being able to upload the required application materials through Grants.gov.

The EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two (2) 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 application 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 the 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, 2020, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to the EPA through December 31, 2020). 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, 2020 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2021, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2021.

Note: The process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the EPA contact listed in Section VII.

B. Application Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of an application must be made by an official representative of the applicant's 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, 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 the applicant's organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage the applicant to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that the applicant's organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS number) and a current registration with SAM, which can take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on Grants.gov and SAM.gov and a DUNS number assignment are free.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS number) 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 and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then "Apply for Grants" from the dropdown menu and follow the instructions accordingly.

Note: To apply through Grants.gov, the applicant 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.

Applicants may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching the funding opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to Grants.gov and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number – EPA-R7-LCRD-2021 – or the Assistance Listing number that applies to the announcement – Assistance Listing 66.808 – in the appropriate field and click "Search."

Note: All applications must now be submitted through Grants.gov using the "Workspace" feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page.

Please submit all application materials described in this Appendix and in Section IV through Grants.gov. Applicants are strongly encouraged to follow the instructions for preparing the mandatory documents provided in Section IV.

C. Technical Submission Issues

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 (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 (2) different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to recreate the package should submission problems be experienced, or a revised application needs to be submitted.

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. The 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 the application is submitted to Grants.gov before the due date identified in Section IV of this announcement. The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week, except federal holidays.

A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture the 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.

D. 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 does not resolve the problem to ensure the application is submitted to Grants.gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below.

The EPA will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All e-mails, as described below, are to be sent to Gayle Hubert (hubert.gayle@epa.gov) with the Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line. If the applicant is unable to e-mail, contact Gayle Hubert at (913) 551-7439. Be aware that the EPA will only consider applications that were unable to transmit 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 its application package in a timely manner because it did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

- If the applicant experiences problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call Grants.gov for assistance at (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 (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 Gayle Hubert at (913) 551-7439 or hubert.gayle@epa.gov.

- 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, e-mail Gayle Hubert (hubert.gayle@epa.gov) prior to the application deadline. The e-mail message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.
- 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, promptly e-mail Gayle Hubert (hubert.gayle@epa.gov) with the Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line within one (1) business day of the closing date of this announcement. The e-mail should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

Note: Successful submission through Grants.gov or via e-mail does not necessarily mean the application is eligible for award.