AGENCY: **U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

TITLE: **TRIBAL SUPPORT FOR PARTICPATION IN THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK**

ACTION: **Request for Applications (RFA)**

RFA NUMBER: **EPA-OEI-OIM00--18--00**

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.608

IMPORTANT DATES

The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **February 22, 2019 by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST). Application** packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov) to be considered for funding. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible organizations to provide the outreach and technical assistance necessary to increase tribal participation in the National Environmental Information Exchange Network (EN) (http://www.exchangenetwork.net/), which is an element of E-Enterprise for the Environment (EE) (https://e-enterprisefortheenvironment.net). The EN is an Internet-based system used by state, tribal and territorial partners to securely share environmental and health information with one another and EPA (https://www.epa.gov/exchangenetwork). The objective of the cooperative agreement is to strengthen the data and information technology (IT) management skills of tribes so they can fully participate in innovative technology efforts of the EN, and incorporate data schema, software, and services developed by EN partnerships into their environmental management programs.

In accordance with CFDA 66.608, assistance under this program is available to federally recognized Indian Tribes, public and private universities and colleges, and other public or private nonprofit institutions. 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. For profit organizations are not eligible for funding. Federal Agencies may not apply. Federal employees are not eligible to serve in a principal leadership role on a grant and may not receive salaries or augment their Agency's appropriations in other ways through grants made by this program. In addition, in order to be eligible an applicant must be an organization that is broadly representative of federally recognized Indian tribes with the goal of expanding tribal participation in the EN.

The recipient will promote discussions, collaboration, partnerships and technical assistance to support data and IT management practices among representatives of tribes, states, and federal agencies. These efforts may include fostering collaboration between Tribes and Tribal organizations through the EN Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG), EE Management Board, EE/EN Interoperability and Operations Team (IOT), EPA Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOCs) and other EPA Tribal Partnership Groups (TPGs) (https://www.epa.gov/tribal/tribal-partnership-groups).

FUNDING/AWARDS: The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is approximately $1,500,000 over a 5-year period dependent on funding availability, the quality of applications received and other applicable considerations. Through this cooperative agreement, EPA anticipates an annual award not to exceed approximately $300,000. The cooperative agreement will be funded incrementally for up to four additional years. In FY 2019, total funding shall not exceed approximately $300,000. Funding beyond the initial FY 2019 amount is not guaranteed and depends on effective performance, the availability of funds, and other EPA priorities and applicable considerations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION 4
A. Background....4
B. Scope of Work 5
C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage, Anticipated Outputs/Outcomes and Performance Measures ..9
D. Statutory Authority 11
II. AWARD INFORMATION 11
A. Amount of Funding Available 11
B. Number of Agreements to be Awarded 11
C. Project Period for Award 12
D. Funding Type 12
III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION 12
A. Eligible Entities 12
B. Cost-Sharing or Matching 13
C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria 13
IV. APPLICATION and SUBMISSION INFORMATION 13
A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures 13
B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions (see Appendix A) 15
C. Content of Application Submission 15
D. Submission Date and Times 17
E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into the Solicitation 17
V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION 18
A. Evaluation Criteria 19
B. Review and Selection Process 20
C. Other Factors 20
D. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into the Solicitation 20
VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION 21
A. Award Notices 21
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements 21
C. Reporting Requirement 21
D. Disputes 22
E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into the Solicitation 22
VII. AGENCY CONTACTS 22
APPENDIX A - Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions 23
APPENDIX B – Budget Detail Sample 27

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

The National Environmental Information *Exchange Network* (EN) is an *Internet*-based system used by states, tribal and territorial partners to securely share environmental and health information with one another and *EPA*. The EN Grants Program supports the development of and participation in the EN. Since FY 2002, the EN Grants Program has awarded funding to all 50 states, over 75 tribes, and 6 territories. Through the EN Grants Program, EN partners define standards that make data more usable and build shared services and tools which foster more informed and efficient environmental management.

An important element of the EN Grants program is to support building the data and information technology management capacity of organizations that want to participate in the EN, including federally recognized tribes or tribal organizations that support such tribes. Achieving this capacity includes ensuring the EN tribal community has the necessary programming, analytical, IT security, and IT network skills so they can fully utilize the benefits of the EN as they manage their environmental programs. Tribes are also seeking to create a community of practice to exchange IT solutions and data management practices. Together these efforts will enhance the technical capacity to develop, deploy and maintain environmental information exchanges across tribes and the EN, leading to improved business or environmental management practices. More information on the EN Grants Program can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/exchangenetwork/exchange-network-grant-program.

The EN is a key component of the E-Enterprise (EE) Initiative, a collaboration between tribes, territories, states and the EPA, to transform the way environmental programs are managed. EE achieves this through early and meaningful engagement on shared priority issues and collaboration to reduce regulatory and management burdens by streamlining business and operational processes. The EN is the EE mechanism to provide innovative technology solutions to support this improved, streamlined model of environmental management and to improve the collection, management, exchange, access, sharing and analysis of environmental data. Although the foundation of the EN is a secure, Internet-based platform for data exchange, it is evolving to better support changing environmental management needs related to solutions developed through EE. This includes partner collaboration on technological innovations, solutions, and services for sharing a wide range of data that inform the business of environmental protection. Through this collaboration, the EN is powering the streamlining and modernization of environmental protection identified and implemented through the EE effort. Additional information on the EN and EE can be found at: http://www.exchangenetwork.net/, https://www.epa.gov/exchangenetwork, http://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/, https://www.epa.gov/e-enterprise, and https://e-enterprisefortheenvironment.net.

The EN Tribal Technical Assistance Group (TTAG), formerly called the EN Tribal Governance Group (TGG), is a volunteer committee of data and IT professionals that support environmental management in federally-recognized tribes and tribal consortia. The TTAG serves as a national forum for tribal managers to strategically assess and plan for the capacity needs of tribes as they relate to the EN objectives and alignment to EE goals. The TTAG discusses issues related to data and IT management within tribal environmental programs as well as advocates for tribal data and IT management issues and requirements that relate to EN and EE activities. The TTAG develops an

annual workplan to increase national tribal awareness and expertise in data and IT management as well as discusses how the EN can assist tribes in these areas. They address tribal issues or concerns related to data management, storage, transfer, analysis and sharing of data through mentoring, training and outreach. Several TTAG members participate in EE/EN governance bodies which enables the TTAG to be familiar with the overall direction of the EE efforts as they develop strategies to address tribal data and IT management training, technical assistance and mentoring activities. More information on the TTAG (formerly known as the TGG) can be found at: http://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/.

B. Scope of Work

EPA's Office of Environmental Information is seeking applications from eligible organizations to provide outreach to increase and enhance tribal participation in the EN (http://www.exchangenetwork.net/) which is an element of EE (https://e-enterprisefortheenvironment.net/https://e-enterpisesfortheenvironment.net). The recipient will support planning, conduct outreach and communications, promote collaboration, as well as provide technical assistance, mentoring, and training opportunities. This will include supporting interactions between tribes with mature data management and IT practices and those with emerging IT and data management practices who are potential partners in the EN. The recipient will also support information sharing among tribal EN stakeholders. This includes supporting the operation of the Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG), as a national forum for tribal data and IT managers who support environmental management. Providing the TTAG with logistical support so that its members may interact with each other, with tribes, EE/EN governance bodies and with EPA is a key component of this cooperative agreement. This work supports the goals of EPA's Policy for the Administration of Environmental Programs on Indian Reservations in 1984 (also known as EPA's Indian Policy) http://www.epa.gov/indian/pdf/indian-policy-84.pdf which supports tribal governments having the primary authority and responsibility in matters affecting American Indian Reservations.

Applicants must demonstrate in their application how they will address each of the tasks, and each of the components associated with each task, discussed below, specifically, including a percentage of monthly time devoted to each task. Efficient use of resources to address all tasks is encouraged.

The anticipated activities envisioned under this project are associated with supporting tribal participation in the Exchange Network. These activities have been divided into four major tasks. Applications that do not address all four tasks, and each of the components associated with each task, discussed below will not be considered for funding.

Task 1: Outreach to federally recognized tribes, tribal organizations, and other federal agencies about the Exchange Network (EN).

Increasing the Tribal community's knowledge of the Exchange Network and how it, along with EN grants, can support building the data and technology management capacity of tribal environmental programs is key for increased tribal participation in the EN and associated EE efforts. It is particularly important that tribes understand how EN participation can expand partner collaboration on technological innovations, solutions, and services for sharing a wide range of data that inform the business of environmental protection Thus, robust outreach to and communication with federally recognized tribes, tribal organizations, and other federal agencies about the EN and EE is a key goal for this cooperative agreement. The applicant must demonstrate the outreach and communication approaches they will take to achieve the communication goals outlined in this solicitation notice.

The successful applicant will demonstrate how they will reach a broad tribal audience and facilitate the participation of interested tribes in EN and EE activities. They must explain how they will ensure the materials developed specifically reference and incorporate tribal cultures, customs, and the unique history and situation of Native Americans nationwide. The successful applicant will describe the mix of outreach tools they will use, how they will determine the audiences they will reach and information relevant to those audiences, the frequency of delivery, and how they will link and align messages in these communications to EN, EE, and RTOC activities and communication forums such as websites and social media. As appropriate, the applicant should discuss how they plan to update and maintain information communicated on electronic media as well as staff such efforts.

Applicants must also address how they will meet the following components associated with this task. Applicants may choose to also address other components they believe are necessary to successfully perform this task.

a. Modes of outreach and delivery: The applicant might consider: newsletters, information list-servs, webinars, workshops, forums or meetings open to general tribal participants, data and IT management training, technical assistance, and mentoring. The recipient might also consider periodically conducting interviews and other means to gather input, as needed, to identify training and technical support needs.

b. Tribal EN National Conference: The Tribal EN Conference is intended to enable tribes to meet and discuss current and future issues related to collection, management, analysis, exchange, and sharing of a broad range of environmental information, as well as provide training workshops on those topics. Recognizing the importance of communications and networking, the recipient shall organize and promote one national Tribal EN Conference during each year of the agreement. The focus and content of each annual conference will be determined by the recipient and the TTAG, as well as informed by consultation with EPA, other tribal feedback processes, and current national program initiatives, such as EE.

    - Limited financial support should be available to tribes unable to fund their own travel and will be determined by the recipient. Attendance from throughout Indian country and Alaska Native Villages is preferred and EPA's participation is essential.

    - Applicants must describe how the national Tribal EN Conference will be developed, planned, scheduled, and implemented in a manner that encourages interest and attendance by current and prospective tribal EN partners, as well as tribal, state, and territorial participants in the EE Initiative. Applicants should discuss and explain how funding support would be structured for tribes unable to fund their own travel, how locations would be determined, and provide suggestions for ensuring topics are current and of interest to a broad audience.

c. Outreach to Federal Agencies: Many Federal Agencies have tribal grant and technical assistance programs in the data and IT management arenas. In times of limited resources, it is increasingly important to collaborate with those federal government agencies whose experiences and resources can be leveraged to maximize building tribal data and IT management capacity, a key goal of the EN. The successful applicant must explain how they plan to effectively reach out to and build partnerships with other federal agencies whose mission supports, or can aid in, building tribal capacity for data collection, management, storage, exchange, sharing, and analysis in support of

improved environmental decision-making. Some departments or agencies to consider could include but are not limited to: US Department of the Interior, US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Indian Health Service.

Task 2: Support for the Exchange Network Tribal Technical Assistance Group, formerly known as the Exchange Network Tribal Governance Group.
http://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/about.html.

Support Operation and Logistics of TTAG (under Task 2): The successful applicant will support the operation of the TTAG and logistics of the TTAG's actions as a national forum for interactions with tribes, EPA, and EE/EN governance bodies. The successful applicant will also support the TTAG in outreach discussions with tribes, to obtain non-consensus tribal input on new and/or current priority actions identified by the TTAG that may impact tribes. Examples of identified priority actions could include new initiatives or workgroups taking place under the EN, technology initiatives, technical efforts supporting EE, or other associated data efforts.

Applicants must also address how they will meet the following components associated with this task. Applicants may choose to also address other components they believe are necessary to successfully perform this task.

a. Propose updates to the TTAG charter as necessary to ensure effectiveness in achieving TTAG goals and objectives.
b. Support TTAG membership in coordination with the TTAG and EPA. Conduct the process for filling TTAG vacancies pursuant to the charter. Work with the TTAG to recruit new members as needed to ensure the TTAG will adequately receive individual input from tribes across the nation, as much as possible. It is anticipated that the existing TGG membership will continue to serve on the TTAG, in accordance with the current charter.
c. Assist TTAG with planning meetings and developing meeting agendas in consultation with the TTAG and EPA. Support two face-to-face TTAG-EPA meetings per year (one at the annual Tribal EN Conference and one at the EE-EN national meeting when possible). In years when it is not possible to have a face-to-face at the EE-EN national meeting, the location will be jointly agreed upon by the TTAG and EPA in a place that is easily traveled to by tribal communities. One of the two meetings should consist of a face-to-face meeting between the TTAG and the tribal members of the EELC. Applicants should describe their proposed locations for the Tribal EN Conferences in their application.
d. Encouraging the TTAG to support having at least one TTAG member on each of the EE/EN governance groups. The objective is to ensure that the TTAG understands the overall directions of the EE initiative as they determine how to approach data and IT management training, technical assistance and mentoring activities to allow tribes to fully take advantage of EN and EE products for environmental management.
e. Support TTAG travel by making travel arrangements and provide funding for necessary travel-related expenses (e.g., airfare, hotel, and per-diem) for TTAG members for the Tribal EN Conference and any other scheduled face-to-face TTAG EPA meetings. Funds awarded under this announcement may also be used by the recipient to support TTAG member travel expenses for participation at meetings identified in the cooperative agreement workplan, including TTAG member representation at relevant conferences and meetings to conduct tribal outreach, and identify and address high priority tribal interest areas. TTAG travel to relevant conferences and meetings must be for meeting the objectives of this project and acquiring knowledge that will be disseminated back to the TTAG and more broadly to tribal EN

participants and data management staff. Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend meetings and conferences. 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 meetings and conferences. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

f. Provide technical support for regularly scheduled conference calls for joint TTAG and EPA discussions to exchange and bring new information or tribal perspectives on issues related to data and the EN. In their applications, applicants should support regularly scheduled monthly calls, (alternating between TTAG and recipient calls and calls between the TTAG, recipient, and EPA) and occasional special calls, to be held as needed, to cover topics that may take and describe their approach to establishing the agenda for the calls. Although the successful applicant will consult with EPA's Project Officer on the agenda for the calls, the final decision on the agenda for the calls will be made by the recipient and the TTAG.

Task 3: Promote collaboration, capacity building, mentoring and information sharing among tribal stakeholders.

To promote collaboration, mentoring and information sharing beyond the annual Tribal Exchange Network Conference, the recipient will work with the TTAG to develop and maintain a mentoring program for tribal stakeholders. The goal is to obtain commitments from technologically advanced tribes to be leaders (mentors) by sharing and transferring their knowledge of the EN and its tool and products and help potentially interested or less technologically advanced tribes gain expertise to successfully develop and maintain their data exchanges using the EN. A tribal mentoring program will also help increase collaboration among tribes, facilitate tribe-to-tribe knowledge and technology transfer, and will promote the EN to potential tribal stakeholders. Applications must describe how these activities will be structured including methods to:

a. Create training and mentoring opportunities to include at least one face-to-face workshop and 2 webinars on technical topics per year, that will enhance tribal knowledge of EN technology and shared services as well as data management/analysis approaches.
b. Offer mentoring (e.g., webinar, video, etc.) that will be funded and maintained through this cooperative agreement.
c. Provide funding to adequately support mentoring efforts.
d. Ensure that tribal stakeholders have equal access to EN information.
e. Assist in acquiring skills and experience necessary to successfully develop and maintain data exchanges using the EN.
f. Support tribes in the development of plans and roadmaps to support technical capacity-building of the TTAG in support of the EN and EE goals and objectives.

To build upon existing services and efforts toward building tribal capacity for participation in the EN, the recipient will also work with EPA and the TTAG to promote reuse of products developed from past EN grants and/or those registered in the EPA Reusable Component System (RCS), as well as data or technology management tools or services developed as part of EE projects. These efforts will assist tribes and EPA in expanding capacity to more tribes in an efficient and effective manner. The recipient, with EPA input and support, will also look at creative solutions, including other federal agencies' solutions, for funding enterprise licenses (such as ESRI GIS software) to promote more effective solutions for tribal capacity building.

Task 4: Serve as a coordinator between the TTAG, tribal EN, and the EE/EN governance groups and between the TTAG and the EPA's Office of Environmental Information/Office of Information Management.

The recipient will work with the TTAG members and tribal EN grantees to ensure the EN and EE tools, expertise, and mentorship opportunities are known and understood. The recipient will also serve as a liaison between TTAG and tribal representation on EE/EN governance groups. This is intended to ensure that tribal issues raised by the TTAG related to data collection, information management, sharing, exchange, and analysis are conveyed to EPA, the tribal members, and other coordinators of the EELC, EE-EN MB, EN IOT, and MB/IOT Chairs, as appropriate. The recipient will also support the Tribal members of the IOT on coordination tasks related to the Tribal role on the IOT and will also support any travel by the tribal IOT member to IOT meetings (normally twice each year). This is intended to make certain that tribal data and IT management needs are adequately factored into the day-to-day execution of EE/EN governance operations, decisions, and policies. The Coordinator along with TTAG members on EE/EN governance groups will provide strategic advice to the TTAG relating to the direction and priorities of EE. The Coordinator along with TTAG members on EE/EN governance groups is also responsible for making the TTAG aware of EE/EN Governance efforts that may impact the activities, mentoring/training, and outreach approaches of the TTAG. The Coordinator:

a. Serves as a primary liaison between the TTAG and the EE/EN Governance Groups, EPA, and Stakeholders.
b. Continuously builds relationships with and among the TTAG, EE, EN, tribal and EPA partners so that the Coordinator can effectively keep the TTAG informed of potential synergies and preemptively identify areas where further discussion is needed and propose solutions to assure tribal data and IT management issues are adequately addressed in EE approaches.
c. Brings the TTAG and stakeholder tribal communities together with EE/EN governance groups and communities to effectively and efficiently work towards achieving shared goals. For example, the recipient could organize this through a face-to-face meeting once per year between the TTAG and tribal EELC members. The recipient should also work with TTAG members to consider working with their tribes to be nominated to EE/EN governance groups.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage, Anticipated Outputs/Outcomes and Performance Measures

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements with the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-03/documents/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf).

1. **Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan:** The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 2, "Cooperative Federalism: Rebalance the power between Washington and the states to create tangible environmental results for the American people" Objective 2.1, "Enhance Shared Accountability: Improve environmental protection through shared governance and enhanced collaboration with state, tribal, local, and federal partners using the full range of compliance

assurance tools." All applications must be for projects that support the goals and objectives identified above.

Please read EPA's FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan (www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan) for more information.

EPA also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-03/documents/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf).
Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the priorities described above.

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

   Expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement include development of communications materials targeted to tribes' support for the TTAG, national tribal meetings, updated website and required reports, as specified in Section VI (C) of this announcement, "Reporting Requirement."

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

   Projects to be funded under this announcement are expected to produce at least one, and preferably all, of the following environmental outcomes:
   a. Continued and increased tribal participation in the EN;
   b. Expanded tribal participation with a greater geographic representation on the TTAG; and
   c. More tribes sharing environmental data electronically using the EN for improved management of their environmental programs.

4. **Performance Measures.** Overall Vision for Success: As part of its application, the successful applicant is also expected to describe their overall vision for successfully accomplishing the project to support tribal participation in the EN/EE. Factors to consider may include, but are not limited to: (1) how the applicant will work with tribal representatives and provide appropriate techniques and formats to ensure that tribal perspectives are understood by EPA and EE partners, of which the EN is a key component, (2) there is a diverse and geographically balanced TTAG to fully portray the wide array of tribal views, (3) how the applicant will keep the TTAG, tribes and the EPA Project Officer informed throughout the project to meet the specific needs of the TTAG and EPA, (4) how the applicant defines success for the project, (5) the applicant will monitor and collect success stories, and (6) how the applicant will measure project success.

The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their proposal. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful process and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. It is expected that the description of performance measures will include the following: sustained or increased levels of participation by tribal members in EE/EN governance meetings, groups and projects; speed and accuracy in delivering technical assistance and meeting minutes to tribal members in support of EE/EN governance meetings; and effectiveness of and satisfaction in training. The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

a. What are the measurable short term and longer term results the project will achieve?
b. How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

D. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for this action is Clean Air Act, Section 103; Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10; Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442; Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, Section 203; Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, Section 20; Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3); Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001; and Public Law 105-174.

All applications must also support the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 102(2)(F) for international awards; and the Indian Environmental General Assistance Program Act supports EPA efforts to encourage and facilitate involvement of tribal partner governments in the EN.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Amount of Funding Available

The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is approximately $1,500,000 over a 5-year period dependent on funding availability, the quality of applications received and other applicable considerations. Through this cooperative agreement, EPA anticipates an annual award not to exceed approximately $300,000. The cooperative agreement will be funded incrementally for up to four additional years. In FY 2019, total funding shall not exceed approximately $300,000. Funding beyond the initial FY 2019 amount is not guaranteed and depends on effective performance, the availability of funds, and other EPA priorities and applicable considerations.

B. Number of Agreements to be Awarded

EPA anticipates the award of one cooperative agreement under this competitive opportunity whose annual value shall not exceed approximately $300,000 annually, subject to the availability of funds, quality of evaluated applications, funding availability, and other applicable considerations.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and other applicable considerations, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date

of the original selections.

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

C. Project Period for Award

The estimated initial project period for the award resulting from this solicitation will begin as early as April 1, 2019 and end no later than March 31, 2020. Proposed project periods may be up to five consecutive years.

D. Funding Type

The funding for selected projects will be in the form of a cooperative agreement.

Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects 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 procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Entities

In accordance with CFDA 66.608, assistance under this program is available to federally recognized Indian Tribes, public and private universities and colleges, and other public or private nonprofit institutions. 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. For profit organizations are not eligible for funding. Federal Agencies may not apply. Federal employees are not eligible to serve in a principal leadership role on a grant and may not receive salaries or augment their Agency's appropriations in other ways through grants made by this program. In addition, in order to be eligible an applicant must be an organization that is broadly representative of federally recognized Indian tribes with the goal of expanding tribal participation in the EN.

Applicants with questions about eligibility can contact Edward Mixon, at (202) 566-2142 or mixon.edward@epa.gov. Applicants not meeting the eligibility criteria may consider collaborative work with eligible organizations. EPA will only evaluate applications with eligible entities identified as the lead implementing entity for the project.

B. Cost-Sharing or Matching

This grant does not require cost sharing or matching of funds by applicants.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications from eligible applicants (see Section III.A of this RFA) that meet all of these threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the ranking criteria in Section V of this RFA. If necessary, EPA may contact applicants to clarify threshold eligibility questions prior to making an eligibility determination. 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. **Application Content and Submission**
   - **a.** Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and content requirements set forth in Section IV of this RFA or else they will be rejected.
   - **b.** Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV and Appendix B of this RFA with respect to the Project Narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
   - **c.** Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the applications submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their applications are timely and properly 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 system issues. 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 late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Edward Mixon, mixon.edward@epa.gov or 202-566-2142 as soon as possible after the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

2. Applications must support EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2, "Cooperative Federalism."

3. Applications that do not address all four tasks as described in Section I.B. Scope of Work, and each of the components associated with each task, will not be considered for funding.

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

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

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

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

Courier Address:
OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Rm # 51278
Washington, DC 20004

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

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

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request – all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding 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 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, 2018, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2018). 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, 2017 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2018, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2018.

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

B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions (see Appendix A)

Your organization's authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **February 22, 2019, 11:59 PM Eastern Time**.

C. Content of Application Submission

The following documents are required under this announcement. All applicable forms and documents must be submitted and validated within grants.gov or, for applicants with a waiver, submitted via a method specified in the waiver **at or before 11:59 pm on February 22, 2019.** The application package ***must*** include all of the following materials:

1. **Grant Application Forms**. Please complete the forms as appropriate.

    a. Standard Form (SF) -424, *Application for Federal Assistance*. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

    b. SF-424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.* Collects budget information for Non-Construction Programs.

    c. SF-424B, *Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.* Provides assurances for Non-Construction Programs.

    d. EPA Form 5700-54, *EPA Key Contacts Form*. Collects contact information for individuals responsible for various aspects of the proposed work, including authorized representative, payee, administrative contact, and investigators.

    e. EPA Form 4700-4, *Preaward Compliance Review Report for all Applicants and Recipients Requesting Federal Financial Assistance.* Collects information that enables EPA to determine whether applicants are developing projects, programs, and activities on a non-discriminatory basis.

2. **Project Narrative.** The project narrative must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-III of this announcement (including the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C) and **must address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V**. The Project Narrative (a through e below) cannot exceed a maximum of 10 single-spaced typewritten pages, including the Summary Page — excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials, such as resumes and letters of support, can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the page limit.

   a. **Summary Information Page (recommended not to exceed one page)**
      i. Project Title
      ii. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
      iii. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA.
      iv. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost share or in-kind resources.
      v. Project period. Provide beginning and ending dates. (Projects are anticipated to begin date and end no later than date.)
      vi. DUNS number

   b. **Project Summary/Approach.** The summary shall contain the following components:
      i. Detailed project summary addressing Section I requirements for all tasks and associated components, description of specific actions and methods to be undertaken and the responsible institutions to perform the work described in Section I, including estimated time line for each task.
      ii. Description of the associated work products to be developed.
      iii. Explanation of project benefits to the public, and specifically the potential audience(s) served.
      iv. Description of the roles of the applicant and partners, if any.
      v. Description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project.
      vi. Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. For example, identify any specific experience and expertise your organization and key staff have in working collaboratively with EPA and Native American Indian Tribes.

   c. **Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures.** Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the project **(See Section I)**, including what performance measurements, timeline of milestones, or other means will be used to track and measure your progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs and how the results of the project will be evaluated.

   d. **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance.** Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of

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

e. **Detailed Budget Narrative (See Appendix B, Budget Sample).** This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget found in the SF- 424A. Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award

   i. Description of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task.
   ii. Description of the applicant's approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.
   iii. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. *Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award.

3. **Attachments**. These are optional and are not included in the 10-page limit. Nor are these attachments considered during evaluation of an applicant's application.

   a. Biographical Sketch. Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all Principal Investigators and any other key personnel.
   b. Support Letters – These should indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.

D. Submission Date and Times

The closing date and time for submission of applications is **February 22, 2019 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET)**. Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses. **EPA strongly encourages applicants to carefully review the "Contracts and Subawards" solicitation clause before naming project partners, contractors (including consultants) or subrecipient's in applications.** 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 solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Only eligible entities whose applications meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this RFA will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal.** Each application will be rated using a point system. Applications will be evaluated based on a total of 100 points possible.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
1. <u>Project Summary/Approach</u>: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors: **(i) (20 pts)** the extent and quality to which the project narrative includes a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and tasks in Section I, Parts B (Scope of Work) and C (EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs), **(ii) (15 pts)** the extent and quality to which the project narrative sets forth an approach for the execution of the tasks associated with the project as described in Section I and for achieving the project goals and objectives by project end, **(iii) (10 pts)** the extent and quality to which the project narrative sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project(s).	45
2. <u>Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures</u>: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the effectiveness of the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I of this announcement. In addition, the Agency will evaluate the performance measures proposed by the applicant and how they will be used to help track and measure the Applicant's progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes.	10
3. <u>Programmatic Capability and Past Performance</u>: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:	30
i. (7 pts) past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in Section IV.C of the announcement,	
ii. (7 pts) history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in Section IV.C of the announcement, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not,	
iii. (7 pts) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project,	

iv. (9 pts) staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. Note: In evaluating applicants under items i and ii of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these sub-factors (items i and ii above - a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.	
4. <u>Budget:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the proposed project budget to determine the extent to which, **i. (5 pts)** costs are allowable and reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes, **ii. (5 pts)** the proposed budget provides a detailed breakout of the approximate funding used for each major activity.	10
<u>5. Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds</u>: 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.	5

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III.C of this RFA. Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA evaluation team. Each application will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered by the review panel. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the EPA Selection Official based on these reviews and rankings.

C. Other Factors

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

D. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation

including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

Following evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

1. **Successful Applicants:** EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic or postal mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal 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 Grants & Interagency Management Division of the Office of Grants and Debarment.

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

2. **Unsuccessful Applicants**: EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

C. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. Quarterly reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for the next quarter and a summary of expenditures are required. The final report shall be submitted to EPA within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report must include: summary of the

project or activity, advances achieved and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of quarterly reports will be established by EPA, after the grants are awarded. Award recipients may be provided with additional information and guidance on reporting performance measures and project progress after award.

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) located on the web at: www.epa.gov/grants/dispute-resolution-procedures. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of this announcement.

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, subrecipients and contractors (including individual consultants) can be found at: 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 proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information, contact:

ATTN: Edward Mixon
Office of Information Management
Office of Mission Support - Environmental Information
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
WJ Clinton Building West, Room #6408U
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Mail Code: 2824T
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 566-2142 Phone
(202) 566-1648 Fax
mixon.edward@epa.gov

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail, fax or email to the contact person listed above. The deadline for submitting questions or comments is **February 15, 2019** 11:59 p.m., EST. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the EN webpage http://www.epa.gov/grants/ exchangenetwork.net.

APPENDIX A - Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then go to the "Get Registered" link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. DUNS number) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS number) is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS number listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

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

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to Grants.gov and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number **EPA-OEI – OIM00-18-00,** or the CFDA number, CFDA 66.608, in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

Please 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.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **February 22, 2019, by 11:59 p.m. ET**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit *all* of the application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package accessed using the instructions above.

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement, as described in Section IV.C of the RFA. The application package ***must*** include all of the following materials:

Mandatory Documents

- Standard Form (SF) -424, *Application for Federal Assistance*. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

- Standard Form SF-424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.* Collects budget information for Non-Construction Programs.

- SF-424B, *Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.* Provides assurances for Non-Construction Programs.

- EPA Form 5700-54, *EPA Key Contacts Form*. Collects contact information for individuals responsible for various aspects of the proposed work, including authorized representative, payee, administrative contact, and investigators.

- EPA Form 4700-4, *Preaward Compliance Review Report for all Applicants and Recipients Requesting Federal Financial Assistance.* Collects information that enables EPA to determine whether applicants are developing projects, programs, and activities on a non-discriminatory basis.

- Project Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form) prepared as described in Section IV of the announcement.

Optional Documents:

- See Section IV.C of announcement: Use 'other attachments' form.

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 Edward Mixon at 202-566-2142 or mixon.edward@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

Technical Issues with Submission

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

revised application needs to be submitted.

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

A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. **For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement.** If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission. Note: Grants.gov issues a "case number" upon a request for assistance.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to Grants.gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to mixon.edward@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Edward Mixon at 202-566-2142. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant www.SAM.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 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 Edward Mixon at 202-566-2142.

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

c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send

an email to mixon.edward@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

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

APPENDIX B – Budget Detail Sample

This section of the work plan is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A and must include a detailed discussion of how EPA funds will be used. Applicants must **itemize** costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

Applicants should use the following instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table to complete the Budget Detail section of the work plan.

- **Personnel - List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.** This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (paid employees of the applicant organization as reflected in payroll tax records). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as cost share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of contractors (including individual consultants), which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, or non-employee program participants (e.g. interns or volunteers) which are included in the "Other" category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization's negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.

- **Fringe Benefits - Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included**. Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits may include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment benefit plans. If the applicant's fringe rate does not include the cost of leave, and the applicant intends to charge leave to the agreement, it must provide supplemental information describing its proposed method(s) for determining and equitably distributing these costs.

- **Travel - Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-State and out-of-State, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.** Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g. inspections) or related to proposed project activities (e.g. attendance at meetings). Only include travel costs for employees in the travel category. Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of contractors (including individual consultants), which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, and non-employee program participants (e.g. trainees) which are included in the "Other" category. Further, travel does not include bus rentals for group trips, which would be covered under the contractual category. Finally, if the applicant intends to use any funds for travel outside the United States, it must be specifically identified. All proposed foreign travel must be approved by EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs prior to being taken.

- **Equipment - Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.** Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts that are not included in the purchase price for the equipment. These types of proposed costs should be included in the "Other" category. Items with a unit cost of less than $5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.94. The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project.
  Note: If your organization has written procurement procedures that define a threshold for equipment costs that is lower than $5,000 then that threshold takes precedence.

- **Supplies - "Supplies" means all tangible personal property other than "equipment."** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the "Other" category.

- **Contractual - Identify each type of proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual services (including consulting services) are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. EPA's Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions has detailed guidance available for differentiating between contractors and subrecipients. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the "Other" category.

  EPA does not require applicants to identify specific contractors. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the anticipated scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known. Any proposed non-competed/sole-source contracts in excess of $3,500 must include a justification. Note that it is unlikely that EPA will accept proposed sole source contracts for goods and services (e.g. consulting) that are widely available in the commercial market. Refer to EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements for EPA's policies on competitive procurements and encouraging the use of small and disadvantaged business enterprises.

- **Other - List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance; rental/lease of equipment or supplies; equipment service or maintenance contracts; printing or photocopying; participant support costs such as non-employee training stipends and travel, subsidies or rebates for purchases of pollution control equipment; and subaward costs. Applicants should describe the items included in the "Other" category and include the estimated amount of participant support costs in a separate line item.

Subawards (e.g., subgrants) are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term "subaward" means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient event if the agreement is referred to as a contract. This term does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work as a separate line item in the "Other" category and a description of the types of activities to be supported. Refer to EPA's Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions for additional guidance.

- **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.** Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, the applicant must have a federal or state negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final or provisional), or must have submitted a proposal to the cognizant Federal or State agency. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:
    - Personnel (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs)
    - Personnel and Fringe (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs)
    - Modified Total Direct Costs (Indirect Rate x Modified Total direct costs = Indirect Costs)
    - Direct Costs minus distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment (Indirect Rate x (total direct cost – distorting factors) = Indirect Costs)

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