United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9

San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund

Request for Applications July 18, 2022

Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 (EPA)
Funding Opportunity Name: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) -San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund, Fiscal Year 2022
Announcement Type: Request for Applications
Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-I-R9-SFBWQIF-22-02
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 66.126

Important Dates:

September 20, 2022	Applications must be received by EPA via Grants.gov by 8:59pm Pacific Time (11:59 pm Eastern Time).
November 5, 2022	Selected applicants notified.
December 5, 2022	Final application packages submitted to EPA.
December 2022	Awards made.

The above dates (other than the September 20, 2022 submission date) are anticipated dates and may be subject to change.

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background. Since 2008, EPA has administered the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF) competitive grant program. Over the next five years the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), aims to broaden the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) reach and focus under the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF). The BIL specifically expands the SFBWQIF to focus on inequities in the access to Federal funding and implementation of projects and climate resilience in underserved communities. It provides additional funding to advance the Biden Administration's goal of investing in America's infrastructure and delivering environmental and public health benefits for communities with environmental justice (EJ) concerns. The purpose of this RFA is to expand water quality restoration efforts in underserved communities and build regional resilience to climate change stressors through funding of efforts and partnerships within historically underserved communities (i.e., economically underserved or other populations with disproportionate exposure to environmental harm). Information about past SFBWQIF projects and current funding opportunities can be found on our website (https://www.epa.gov/sfbaydelta/san-francisco-bay-water-quality-improvement-fund).

The EPA is soliciting applications under the BIL funded SFBWQIF Request for Applications (RFA) to fund projects that have measurable positive impacts in underserved communities, particularly those facing climate change stressors in the San Francisco Bay and its watersheds. These and other funding priorities, as described in Section I.B., are collectively aimed to improve the health of San Francisco Bay and its underserved communities. A broad range of entities, as described in Section III.A., are eligible to submit applications under this announcement for projects within the nine Bay Area counties (Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco.) Applications must fully describe the scope of the project, budget, and environmental results. EPA will use the criteria described in Section V. to evaluate eligible applications. The total amount of fiscal year 2022 funds to be awarded under this announcement is approximately $5 million and awards will range from approximately $200,000 to $1,000,000. Awards will be made under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1330; however, there is no match requirement under the BIL funded SFBWQIF.

B. Program Priorities.

1. All applications must be consistent with the San Francisco Estuary Partnership's (SFEP) Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and must indicate the CCMP objective(s) and action(s) to be implemented under the project. (Attachment A identifies a list of the CCMP objectives and actions that address program priorities and should be used as a basis to provide this information in the proposal narrative.) For additional information on the CCMP refer to the website link in Section VIII.

If an application includes a monitoring component, it should be compatible with the California Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP), the California Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Program, the California EcoAtlas and/or the San Francisco Bay Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) (see links in Section VIII.C.)

2. Environmental Justice (EJ)/Underserved Communities

This RFA aims to support a broad array of project types that will deliver environmental and public health benefits to EJ/underserved communities within the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties.

Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in planning efforts and decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, "underserved communities" means populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, consistent with the Biden Administration's Executive Order 14008 on environmental justice and climate change. The SFBWIF underserved community map (Figure 1) identifies areas with underserved communities that have been adversely and disproportionately affected by multiple sources of pollution.

NOTE: In the past, many Federal agencies used the term "disadvantaged communities." This term has largely been replaced by "underserved communities" and also the descriptor "vulnerable communities." To the extent possible, this RFA will use the term "underserved communities."

With climate change, shoreline communities are most at risk of flooding from sea level and groundwater rise, and potential contamination from old industrial sites around the Bay. EPA is seeking applications that will improve the natural environment and waterbodies in and around underserved communities in one or more of the nine Bay Area counties through meaningful engagement with those communities. Meaningful engagement can include technical support, capacity building, training sessions, expanding public processes, and importantly, time, to build trust relationships with local, regional and other governmental partners. EPA expects project proponents and community

partners to share their successful approaches to community engagement with as broad a regional audience as is practical. The nine Bay Area counties reflect demographic differences and income disparities. The state of California has used community health data including asthma, low birth weights, and cardiovascular disease to identify disadvantaged communities with a GIS-based CalEnviroScreen mapping tool. EPA is using this information to identify underserved communities.

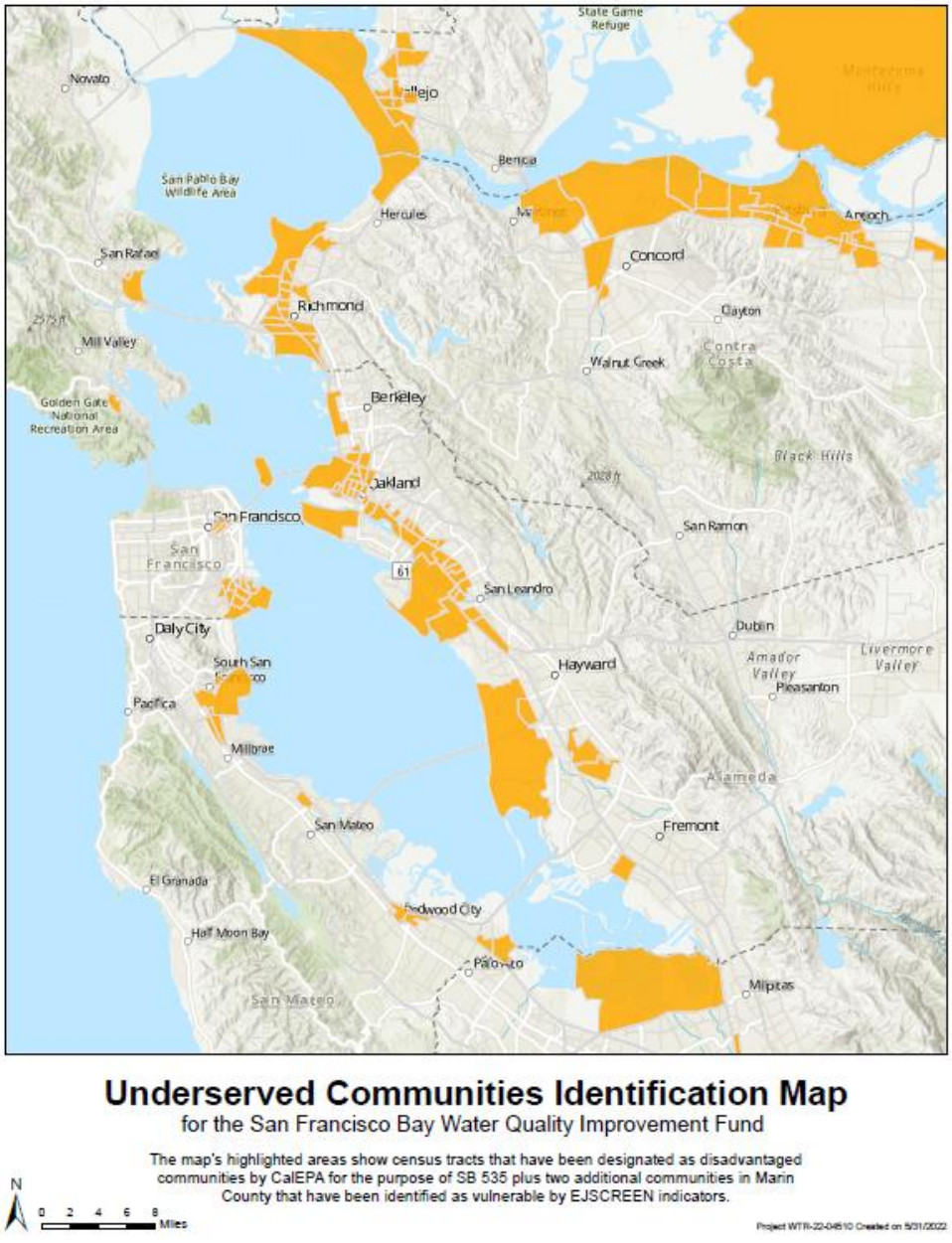
EPA is seeking applications that demonstrate the diversity of organizational support and partnerships within historically underserved communities (i.e. economically disadvantaged or other populations with disproportionate exposure to environmental harm). A project that benefits an underserved community could, for example, include implementation of green infrastructure to improve water quality and reduce a community's vulnerability to flooding from aging infrastructure. Achieving equity in the Bay Area for shoreline and watershed restoration projects will likely include technical and financial support for community representation throughout a project's multi-year planning process. Applications that identify the true cost of community engagement in their budgets to ensure community support of a restoration project is evidence of meaningful engagement.

Examples of EJ program priority projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Community visioning aimed at developing conceptual plans for shoreline projects to improve climate change resilience
- Installation of green stormwater infrastructure features to treat stormwater
- Public education and training programs to build community capacity in the water quality sector
- Building community/volunteer networks to support project implementation, including planting of native plants, removing invasive plants, and trash cleanups
- Community representation in implementation of multi-benefit shoreline projects
- Watershed and urban infrastructure improvements in EJ communities
- Organizational capacity building and career development to benefit the Estuary and its communities
- Contaminant investigations in local communities
- Technical trainings and outreach programs to improve tribal traditional knowledge in the environmental field, etc.
- Solutions that reduce water quality impacts associated with people and communities experiencing homelessness
- Fish consumption outreach programs, etc.

Applicants may refer to the map below (Figure 1) to help identify the location of underserved communities within the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties that will benefit from the proposed project. If an underserved community does not geographically fall into highlighted yellow areas, please describe how your community has been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, for example marginalization of tribes, that identifies your application as serving an underserved community in one or more of the nine Bay Area counties.

FIGURE 1: Underserved Communities Identification Map



3. Scope and Approach

   Applicants should include project descriptions that demonstrate they are well-planned and technically sound (see Section V.A.1.). For example, applicants

may describe how sea level rise, vulnerability to fires in urban-rural interfaces, changes in rainfall patterns and other climate change stressors are considered in the design and implementation of the project. Project descriptions may also convey the multiple benefits the project is expected to provide to an underserved and overburdened community.

4. Environmental Results and Linkage to Strategic Plan
   Pursuant to Section 6.a. of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "*Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements*," Applicants must link proposed assistance agreements to the EPA Strategic Plan (see below). EPA also requires that applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements.

   Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. The activities to be funded under this solicitation support EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this solicitation will support Goal 1 (Tackle the Climate Crisis, and Objective 1.2 Accelerate Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts), Goal 2 (Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights, and Objective 2.1 Promote environmental justice and civil rights at the federal, tribal, state and local levels), and Goal 5 (Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities, and Objective 5.2 Protect and restore waterbodies and watersheds).

- Environmental Outputs and Outcomes. EPA will consider the expected environmental outputs and outcomes during the selection process (See Sections IV. and V.)

    - **Outputs**. The term "output" means an activity, effort, and/or work product that will be produced or provided over a specific period of time or by a specific date. Outputs (or project deliverables) may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Applications must include a description of project outputs and the way in which recipients will track project milestones throughout the grant period. Examples of project outputs include, but are not limited to, the following: number of presentations made, number of participants at an event or training, and draft and final technical reports produced. EPA requires progress reports and a final project report as specified in Section VI.C. "Reporting Requirements" to report on outputs.

    - **Outcomes**. The term "outcome" means an environmental result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out project activities and/or completing outputs related to an environmental goal. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related,

or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. Applications must include a description of project outcomes even if the outcomes will not be achieved within the assistance agreement funding period. For projects that are implementing activities called for in a plan such as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or a restoration plan with an extended timeframe (e.g. 20 years), applicants should explain the degree to which the activities move towards the stated long-term goal or outcome. Outcomes expected as a result of the awards under this announcement may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Improved climate resilience in the form of shoreline protection and/or stormwater management in underserved communities
- "Community restoration" in the form of workforce development, community-based organizational capacity built, etc.
- Additional water/soil clean-up activities funded based on new data gathered to protect communities
- Percentage of land area where green stormwater infrastructure has been or will be implemented to achieve water quality improvements and/or community benefits

Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/201503/documents/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf and https://www.epa.gov/sfbay-delta/applicationassistance#results.

Applicants should carefully review these program priorities and the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. when drafting project proposals.

C. Statutory Authority. Congress appropriated funds for this grant program under the "Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act" (Public Law 118-58). EPA will award IIJA (also known as BIL) funds under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act (National Estuary Program), 33 U.S.C. § 1330.

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

II. Award Information

A. **Available Funding.** The funding amount available under this announcement is approximately $5 million for federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. The amount of funding per award is estimated to range from approximately $200,000 to $1,000,000. EPA anticipates awarding 15 to 20 grants and/or cooperative agreements under this solicitation.

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

EPA intends to fund as many quality applications received that will benefit underserved communities, as defined in Section I.

Funding for projects under this RFA is not guaranteed and is subject to the availability of funds, the evaluation of applications based on the criteria in this announcement, and other applicable considerations. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make no awards, or fewer awards than expected, under this announcement. Further, award of funding through this competition is not a guarantee of future funding.

B. **Project Period for Awards.** EPA anticipates making awards resulting from this solicitation in November 2022. It is anticipated that the grants or cooperative agreements awarded under this announcement will have one to four-year project periods.

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

D. **Funding Type.** EPA will determine whether a grant or cooperative agreement will be issued. If EPA awards a grant agreement, it will provide oversight and monitoring but EPA will not be substantially involved in the recipient's project. 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. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include but is not limited to close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; review of proposed procurements (EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); reviewing qualifications of

key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared (The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.)

III. Eligibility Information

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

A. Eligible Applicants. The following entities are eligible to apply for funding under this announcement: State, local government agencies, districts, and councils; regional water pollution control agencies and entities; State coastal zone management agencies; public and private universities and colleges; and public or private non-governmental, non-profit institutions. Nonprofit organizations must have documentation of non-profit status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service or their state of incorporation. Non-profit organizations as defined in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act 1995 or superseding legislation are ineligible.

B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirement. There is no match requirement. Under the BIL, Congress authorized the EPA Administrator to waive the 50% match requirement for grants awarded under Section 320 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. §1330.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria. These are requirements which if not met by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the proposal from further consideration for funding. All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., B., and C. to be considered eligible. Only applications that meet **all of these criteria** will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria under Section V. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. **Applicant Eligibility:** Applicants must meet the applicant eligibility requirements described in Section III. A.
2. **Program Priorities:** Applicants must demonstrate that the project(s) provides environmental and public health benefits in an underserved community(ies) that falls within the shaded areas on page 5 (see Figure 1) **or** must adequately describe how the applicant's community has been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, for example marginalization of tribes, and that the application serves such community in one or more of the nine Bay Area counties.
3. **EPA Strategic Plan:** Applications must support Strategic Plan Goal 1, Goal 2 and/or Goal 5 of EPA's Strategic Plan as specified in Section I. B. 4.

4. **CCMP Consistency:** Applications must describe how the proposed activities are consistent with SFEP's CCMP (see Attachment A) and identify relevant CCMP objective(s) and action(s) to be implemented by the project.

5. **Substantial Compliance:** All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., B., and C. to be considered eligible. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV. of this solicitation or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV. with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.

6. **Application Submission:** In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV.) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV. of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV., which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with Grants.gov or SAM.gov. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission outside of Grants.gov.

7. **Project Location:** Projects must occur entirely within one or more of the nine Bay Area counties (Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco) that drain to San Francisco Bay.

8. **Ineligible Activities**: 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. The SFBWQIF website has additional information in the Frequently Asked Questions related to ineligible activities.

IV. Application and Submission Information

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

A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures. Complete application packages must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov by **8:59 pm Pacific Time** (11:59 pm Eastern Time) **on September 20, 2022.** Please see the complete instructions for submitting applications via Grants.gov and the limited exception procedures in **Attachment B** to this announcement.

B. Content of Application Submission. Applicants must include the information outlined below in their proposals. The proposal narrative section as described below must be no longer than ten **(10) pages in total** (8 ½ x 11 inches, single spaced); pages in excess of this page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants must also ensure that the proposal narrative provides information addressing all of the proposal evaluation criteria identified in Section V. A. and meets the threshold eligibility criteria identified in III. C. Forms 424, 424(A), maps, the detailed budget form, letters of support, and forms required by Grants.gov in Attachment B **DO NOT** count toward the 10-page limit.

Proposal Submission Content	
Applicant Information on Federal Assistance Standard Form 424	Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address. This form also requires a registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), and a UEI number.
Budget Summary on Federal Assistance Standard Form 424(A)	Provide overall budget information on the form's tabular format including the specific amount being requested from EPA, and the total project cost.
EPA Key Contacts Form	Provide contact information as described in form.
EPA Form 4700-4	See Tips for Completing EPA Form 4700-4 for guidance on filling out this form.
Map	Provide a map of the watershed and the proposed work areas related to the project or, if more appropriate, provide a schematic that helps explain the proposed project activities.
Proposal Narrative (subject to the 10-page limit) includes the following items:	

- Abstract- Summarize (approximately 200 words) your project's environmental and/or community significance, major activities, timeframes, and measurable outcomes.
- Linkage to Strategic Plan- Discuss the specific improvement(s) that will be achieved by the project activities and linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan. Identify the community and associated watershed(s) the community is located in.
- Project activities- Describe the proposed activities and highlight the plans and assessments that form the basis for the activities and expected results.
- Climate Change Resiliency- Describe how risks associated with climate change and planned resiliency are factored into the proposed activities such as addressing sea level rise, changes in rainfall patterns, fires and other known stressors.
- Timeframe- Identify the timeframe for activities and environmental results. If planning and assessment activities are proposed, describe the likelihood of implementation, including key next steps, funding, and timeframe for environmental results.
- CCMP- Provide the list of relevant CCMP objectives and actions to be implemented by the project. A list of the CCMP objectives and actions is included as Attachment A and should be used as a basis to provide this information in the proposal narrative. For additional information on the CCMP refer to the website link in Section VIII.C.
- Outputs and Outcomes- Describe the project outputs (Section I.C.2.a.) and outcomes (Section I.C.2.b.). The "Outputs and Outcomes Summary Table" below is a suggested format to provide the required information.

- Metrics- Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period; outcomes must be quantitative and may be achieved beyond the assistance agreement funding period.
    - Context- Discuss the extent, magnitude and significance of the anticipated outcomes. For example, identify pollutant load reductions to be achieved in terms of the overall reductions and timeframe necessary to achieve water quality standards.
    - Timeframe- Include outputs and outcomes within the project timeframe. If applicable, outcomes achievable beyond the assistance agreement funding period can be included.
    - Tracking- Identify how progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes will be tracked and measured over the expected project time period. For some projects, this may include monitoring and the production of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).
- Geographic Location- Identify the geographic area by watershed and/or more specific location of the project(s).

- Budget Detail- Using a table format, clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. This section also provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget found in the SF 424(A). Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Explanations of the costs associated with each project task, should be provided. Description of costs should correspond to figures presented in the SF 424(A). A table highlighting key tasks and/or outputs for the length of the project with the associated budget breakdown is required. Discuss whether the overall project costs and the various components are cost-effective in furthering future implementation. Budget development guidance resources are provided in Section VIII. C. for Other Information.
- Programmatic Capability and Past Performance history- Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last 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; and (iii) your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

- Organizational experience- Provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project.
- Staff experience- Provide information on your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

- Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds- Provide information on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.
- Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities- Provide information on the disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, and climate-related impacts in the community the project will occur in and how the project will benefit that community in the short and long term.

C. Contracts and Subawards. EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible entities are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards including those contained in 2 CFR Part 200 and EPA's Subaward Policy. EPA has also posted Additional Resources on Subawards for applicants to consult.

Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200. Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the firm's role in preparing the application. For additional guidance applicants should review EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements.

Successful applicants cannot use subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subrecipient must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance found at 2 CFR §200.331, the definitions of Subaward and Subrecipient at 2 CFR 200.1, and Appendix A to EPA's Subaward Policy. EPA will not

be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement requirements in 2 CFR 200.319 and 2 CFR 200.320 and cannot use a subaward as the funding mechanism.

Section V. of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

(i) an applicant's named subrecipients identified in the application if the applicant demonstrates in the application that if it receives an award that the subaward will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 2 CFR Part 200. For example, applicants must not use subawards to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.

(ii) (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the application if the applicant demonstrates in its application that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive procurement requirements in 2 CFR 200.319 and 2 CFR 200.320. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete as provided in 40 CFR 33.301, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subrecipients and/or named contractor(s) during the application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements. For additional guidance applicants should review EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements.

V. Application Review Information

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

A. Evaluation Criteria.

Applications will be evaluated and scored by reviewers using the criteria listed below. Each application may receive up to 100 points. Applicants should fully address these criteria as part of their submittals.

Evaluation Criteria (100 points total)

Points (pts)	Evaluation Criteria
20	**1. <u>Scope/Approach</u>:** Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the quality and degree to which they present the program priorities discussed in Section I. including: • activities based on community priorities stated in community planning documents that can include organizations' strategic plans or workplans, local watershed plans, local land use plans, stormwater/green infrastructure plans; public comment periods for projects, and regional resiliency plans. **(10 pts)** • a description of the environmental and community significance, and ways to share project results regionally to ensure local or regional resiliency **(10 pts)**
25	**2. <u>Environmental Results—Outputs and Outcomes</u>:** Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate: • well defined outputs throughout the project timeframe. **(5 pts)** • clearly described environmental and/or public health results that are specific, quantified and significant and link to EPA's Strategic Plan. **(15 pts)** • an effective plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I.C.2.a. and Section I.C.2.b.** **(5 pts)** *** EPA will consider the quality and scope of the monitoring component to measure environmental results under this criterion. If monitoring is not an appropriate project activity necessary to achieve and document results, proposals will not receive a lower rating under this criterion.*
18	**3. <u>Budget Detail</u>:** Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on: • the level of detailed budget information provided in a table format which should include an approximation of the cost allocated for each major activity over the project's expected timeline. Budget resources necessary for completing a Quality Assurance Project Plan

	(QAPP), if applicable, sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress, are expected to be included. **(13 pts)** • whether the overall project costs and the various components are cost-effective and reasonable in furthering future implementation of similar activities. **(5 pts)**

12	**4. <u>Programmatic Capability and Past Performance</u>:** Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's: • past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the proposal narrative as described in Section IV. C. of the announcement. **(3 pts)** • history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the proposal narrative as described in Section IV. C. of the announcement including: whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, 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 pts)** • organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project. **(3 pts)** • staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. **(3 pts)** *Note: In evaluating applicants under the first two items of this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and/or prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (the first two items 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.*
5	**5. <u>Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds:</u>** Under this criterion, applications 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 pts)**
20	**6. <u>Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities</u>:** Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will address the disproportionate and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect the underserved communities described in Section I of the solicitation. Applications will be evaluated based on: how the project benefits the underserved communities including those that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community and; the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities, especially local residents in these communities who will be affected by the project, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project. Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens and/or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect or have affected the underserved communities described in this solicitation. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and

	policy decisions. Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include: differential proximity and exposure to adverse environmental hazards; greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to causes such as age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or limited access to quality nutrition); unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (for example, subsistence fishing or farming); cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes (due to causes such as lack of or ineffective language access programs, lack of programs to make processes accessible to persons with disabilities, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources); and degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation

B. Review and Selection Process.

1. Applications. Eligible applications will be evaluated by the EPA Region 9 Review Committee which will score and rank them using the evaluation criteria identified above in Section V.A. The Review Committee will consist of EPA staff and may also include representatives from other state or Federal agencies.

2. Final Selections and Awards. The Review Committee will provide rankings and funding recommendations based on the application scores to the selection official (EPA Region 9 Water Division Director.) Final funding decisions will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also take into account the following factors: geographic distribution of funds, diversity of projects, and availability of funds. Applicants selected for funding will be asked to submit a final application package. EPA intends to fund as many quality applications received that will benefit underserved communities, as defined in Section I.

VI. Award Administration Information

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

A. Award Notification. EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic and/or postal mail by approximately November 5, 2022. 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 EPA's Grants Management Office. Applicants are cautioned that only the Award Official is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make

an award to an applicant. The award notice 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.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification by email within 15 days of the final selections.

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

1. Work plan components to be funded under the grant;
2. Estimated funding amounts for each work plan component;
3. Work plan commitments/outputs for each work plan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA in carrying out the work plan commitments.

In addition, 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.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements. The general award and administration process for all San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Funds is governed by regulations at 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, 2 CFR Part 180, 40 CFR Part 33, applicable sections of 40 CFR Part 35 Subpart P, and other applicable EPA policies. All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E. Any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fundraising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other Federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts).

C. Reporting Requirements. Project monitoring and reporting requirements can be found in 2 CFR Part 200. 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. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The content for these reports will be identified during the grant application time frame, and will include reporting on established performance measures indicated in the project description (i.e., goals, outputs and outcomes). The final performance report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired.

D. Pre-award Costs. Under this solicitation, EPA may consider the selected applicant's request to be reimbursed for costs incurred prior to the grant award. However, such costs must comply with the cost principles of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E. Therefore, if costs are incurred before the award, they are incurred at the applicant's own risk. In addition, pre-award costs do not include any direct costs associated with responding to a solicitation or in finalizing the application package.

E. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable laws. Only projects that are considered treatment works projects as defined under the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §1281, must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Compliance with other Federal laws, such as the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Davis-Bacon Act, and state laws and regulations may be required.

VII. Agency Contact

For additional information, please contact:

Luisa Valiela
EPA Region 9, Watersheds Office (WTR-3-2)
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
415-972-3400, valiela.luisa@epa.gov

VIII. Other Information

A. Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC). Certain quality assurance and/or quality control (QA/QC) and peer review requirements are applicable to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or condition; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data also include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and obtained from other sources such as data bases or published literature. Regulations pertaining to QA/QC requirements can be found in 2 CFR Part 200. Additional guidance can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/QUALITY/qa_docs.html.

Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process in their proposed projects. If your organization does not have a Quality Management System in place, one must be developed. A project specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) must be submitted and approved by EPA if your project includes sampling of any kind. If your application is selected and a QAPP required, you are encouraged to contact the EPA's QA Office at 415-9723411 as soon as possible to discuss the process and set up a schedule for review. Allow 3-4 months in your timeline for approval of these plans.

B. **Assistance Agreement Terms and Conditions.** Awards resulting from this funding opportunity announcement will include general terms & conditions, which can be viewed here: https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-terms-and-conditions

C. **Useful References.** The following information is for reference purposes only:

- **S.F. Bay Area TMDLs and 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies**
  http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/TMDLs/

- **California Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)**
  http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/

- **S.F. Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan**
  http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/basin_planning.shtml

- **Bay Area's Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals**
  http://baylandsgoals.org/

- **San Francisco Estuary Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program**
  https://www.sfestuary.org/wrmp/

- **SF Bay Regional Monitoring Program (RMP)**
  http://www.sfei.org/rmp/

- **San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan** http://www.sfestuary.org/ccmp/

- **California EcoAtlas** https://ecoatlas.org/
- **Budget Development Resources**: https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02
- **Indirect cost policy**: https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02-r

Attachment A: SFEP Estuary Blueprint (CCMP) Objectives and Actions
BIL-San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund

2022 Request for Applications

Review this list to select which San Francisco Estuary Partnership's Estuary Blueprint Objective(s) and Action(s) (revised in 2022, referred to as the Estuary Blueprint) will be addressed by the project's proposed activities. Applicants must demonstrate consistency with the SFEP Estuary Blueprint by indicating the Estuary Blueprint's objective(s) and action(s) to be implemented. Provide this information in the proposal narrative section.

OBJECTIVES	
A	Protect, restore, and enhance ecological conditions and processes that support self-sustaining natural communities
B	Eliminate or reduce threats to natural communities
C	Conduct scientific research and monitoring to measure the status of natural communities, develop and refine management actions, and track progress towards management targets
D	Increase resilience of tidal habitats and tributaries to climate change
E	Increase resilience of communities at risk from climate change impacts while promoting and protecting natural resources
F	Promote integrated, coordinated, multi-benefit approaches to increasing resilience
G	Increase drought resistance and water efficiency and reduce reliance on imported water
H	Improve freshwater flow patterns, quantity, and timing to better support natural resources
I	Reduce contaminants entering the system and improve water quality
J	Build public support for the protection and restoration of the Estuary
K	Strengthen regional leadership in support of Estuary health
L	Promote efficient and coordinated regional governance
M	Incorporate the best available social science and cultural knowledge when protecting and improving the Estuary
N	Engage frontline, underserved, and Indigenous communities as partners in protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Estuary

ACTIONS	
1	Plan for increased climate resiliency that incorporates natural resource protection.
2	Elevate frontline and Indigenous communities in planning for and benefiting from a healthy, resilient Estuary.
3	Overcome challenges to accelerate implementation of climate adaptation projects that prioritize natural and nature-based strategies.
4	Implement climate adaptation projects that prioritize natural and nature-based strategies.
5	Restore watershed connections to the Estuary to improve habitat, flood protection, and water quality.

6	Manage sediment and soil on a regional scale and advance beneficial use.
7	Decrease carbon emissions and subsidence in the Delta and increase carbon sequestration on natural and agricultural lands.
8	Implement a Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program.
9	Protect, restore, and enhance intertidal, and subtidal habitats.
10	Protect, restore, and enhance tidal marsh habitat.
11	Protect, restore, and enhance estuarine-upland transition zones and adjacent upland ecosystems.
12	Maximize habitat benefits of managed ponds and other non-tidal wetlands and waters.
13	Protect, restore, and enhance seasonal wetlands.
14	Conserve and enhance riparian and instream habitats throughout the Estuary's watersheds.
15	Minimize the impact of invasive species.
16	Improve the timing, amount, and duration of freshwater flows critical to Estuary health.
17	Reduce water use around the Estuary.
18	Expand the use of recycled water.
19	Manage stormwater with low impact development and green stormwater infrastructure.
20	Advance nutrient management in the Estuary.
21	Address emerging contaminants in the Estuary's waters.
22	Reduce human health risks due to legacy contaminants and contaminants in fish.
23	Reduce trash input into the Estuary.
24	Provide equitable public access and recreational opportunities compatible with wildlife.
25	Champion the Estuary.

Attachment B
GRANTS.GOV SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund
2022 Request for Applications

Updated by the Office of Grants and Debarment (June 2022)

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

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

b. Submission Instructions

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

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using login.gov (1) to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the Entity Registration Checklist for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration

is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

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

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

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

2. Grants.gov Registration Instructions

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

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the application submission deadline.

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

3. Application Submission Process

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

The electronic submission of your application to this funding opportunity must be

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

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

4. Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **September 20, 2022** 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

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

c. Technical Issues with Submission

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

1. Contact Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.

2. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.

3. Send an email with the **Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-I-R9-SFBWQIF-22-02 in the subject line to valiela.luisa@epa.gov **before** the application deadline time and date and **must** include the following:
   a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
   b. Description of the issue
   c. The entire application package in PDF format.
   Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

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

EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues or

for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit prior to the application submission deadline date because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov.

d. Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 – Preaward Compliance Review Report
5. Proposal Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IV.B of the announcement
6. Project Area Map (submit under the "Other Attachments" accessed under the Optional documents" in Grants.gov)

Optional/Other Documents:

7. Other Attachments (e.g. letters of support), if applicable

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Luisa Valiela at (415) 972-3400. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.