

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Applications Due: **Monday, March 16, 2026**



Region 4

2025 South Florida Program

Funding Opportunity Number: **EPA-I-R4-SFL-2025-01**



Contents

1. Basic Information	1
A. Executive Summary:	1
B. Key Information:	1
C. Key Dates:	2
D. Funding Details:	2
E. Agency Contact Information:	2
2. Eligibility.....	2
A. Eligible Applicants.....	2
(1) Other Eligibility Requirements	3
(2) Ineligible Activities	3
B. Cost Sharing	3
3. Program Description	3
A. Purpose, Priorities, and Activities.....	3
(1) Outputs and Outcomes.....	5
(2) Priority Areas	6
(3) Partnerships	8
B. Program Goals and Objectives.....	8
C. Statutory Authority	9
D. Funding Type.....	9
E. Quality Assurance	10
4. Application Contents and Format	11
A. Application Forms	11
B. Applicants Using Contractors.....	11
C. Release Copies of Applications	12
D. Coalition Coverage.....	12
E. Other Program Specific Application Information.....	12
(1) Formatting Instructions.....	13
5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines.....	18
A. Submission Dates and Times	18
B. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)	18
C. Submission Instructions	18
D. Technical Issues with Submission	19
E. Intergovernmental Review	19
6. Application Review Information.....	19
A. Responsiveness Review	19
B. Review Criteria.....	20
C. Review and Selection Process.....	23
(1) Other Evaluation Factors	23

D. Risk Review	23
7. Award Notices.....	24
8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration	24
A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	24
B. Reporting	24
C. Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting.....	24
9. Other Information.....	24
A. Additional Provisions for Applicants.....	24
(1) Award Information.....	25
(2) Disputes	25
(3) Reporting Requirements.....	26
(4) Data Management	26
(5) Publications.....	26
(6) Public Relations.....	26
(7) Combining Applications Into One Award	27
(8) Nonprofit Administrative Capability Clause.....	27
(9) Pre-Budget Webinar.....	27
APPENDIX A APPLICATION SUBMISSION CHECKLIST	28
APPENDIX B APPLICATION COVER PAGE SAMPLE	29
APPENDIX C Map Illustrating the Boundaries of the South Florida Program.....	31

1. Basic Information

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Region 4 – Water Division

2025 South Florida Program

[South Florida Program](#)

A. Executive Summary:

The mission of the EPA South Florida Program is to successfully implement and integrate federal water quality and wetlands programs to enhance the protection and restoration of Florida's Coral Reef, the Everglades, and associated seagrass meadow, mangrove, and wetland habitats, as well as the economically valuable finfish and shellfish fisheries and recreational activities that the unique South Florida ecosystem supports.

The EPA South Florida Program provides competitive grants to further this mission across 16 south Florida counties: Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk, and St. Lucie. This boundary aligns with the boundary of the South Florida Water Management District and corresponds to the United States Geological Survey 4-digit hydrologic unit subregion 'Southern Florida.'

Awarded projects must focus on the development of applied science and practical demonstrations that address immediate and emerging water quality concerns in South Florida waters. This funding opportunity supports projects that not only generate tangible results, but also deepen evidence-based and solutions-oriented knowledge to advance and scale future efforts to improve the quality of South Florida waters and aquatic habitat. Eligible entities include state agencies, local governments, and tribes and intertribal consortia; public and private universities and colleges; laboratories and research organizations; and other public or private nonprofit institutions.

The EPA issues South Florida Program grants as cooperative agreements under statutory authorities derived from and aligned with:

1. The Sanctuaries Act of 1990 provides direct statutory authority for the South Florida Program. This Act acknowledges the need to address water quality concerns that impact South Florida's waters.
2. Section 528(f) of the Water Resources and Development Act of 1996 establishes the Administrator (or designee) as a member of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and directs member agencies to "coordinate the development of consistent policies, strategies,

B. Key Information:

Opportunity Number:

EPA-I-R4-SFL-2025-01

Assistance Listing:

66.484

Announcement Type:

Initial

Funding Available:

\$8,500,000

Number of Awards:

12

plans, programs, projects, activities, and priorities for addressing the restoration, preservation, and protection of the South Florida ecosystem.”

3. The Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, as amended, that codified the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and establishes the Administrator as a member with direction to jointly “coordinate... activities regarding the mapping, monitoring, research, conservation, mitigation, and restoration of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems.”
4. Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act Section provides additional administrative direction for this solicitation. This section authorizes the EPA to award assistance agreements for water quality and watershed management including demonstrations, studies, surveys, education, and research.
5. Congressional appropriations language identifies programmatic areas and resourcing for EPA to consider, including locations, and priority topics for the program.

C. Key Dates:

February 11, 2026 10:00am ET	South Florida Budget Webinar
March 16, 2026 11:59 pm ET	Application Submission Deadline
May 2026	Anticipated Notification of Selection
September 2026	Anticipated Award Notification

D. Funding Details:

It is anticipated that up to **12 awards** will be made under this announcement. The amount of funding is expected to be **\$400,000 to \$1,000,000**, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. Awards funded under this opportunity are expected to have a **2-7 year** project period.

E. Agency Contact Information:

Further information, if needed, may be obtained from the EPA contact(s) indicated below.

Technical Contact:	Elizabeth Smith; smith.elizabeth@epa.gov
Eligibility Contact:	Jennifer Shadle; shadle.jennifer@epa.gov

2. Eligibility

A. Eligible Applicants

Only these types of organizations may apply. Organization types are consistent with definitions at [2 CFR 200.1](#):

- [Indian Tribe](#).
- [State & Local Governments](#).
- U.S. Territories and Possessions.
- Hospitals and Laboratories.
- [Institutions of Higher Education \(IHEs\)](#).
- [Nonprofit organizations](#).

- Intertribal consortia.

(1) Other Eligibility Requirements

Applications must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered eligible:

1. Applications must include activities taking place within or directly relevant to the program area, reference map in [Appendix C](#).
2. Applications must address at least 1 program priority area listed in [Section 3.A\(2\)](#).
3. Applications must not request more than the funding capacity identified for the South Florida Program priority area of the application, listed in [Section 3.A\(2\)](#).

Please see [Section 6](#) for additional threshold criteria.

(2) 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.

B. Cost Sharing

There is no cost share requirement under this program as authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act -- Pub. L. 117-58, 135 Stat. 1396-1406.

Cost sharing is not a requirement to be eligible to apply to this funding opportunity. Voluntarily committed cost sharing is cost sharing specifically pledged on a voluntary basis in the proposal's budget on the part of the non-Federal entity that becomes a binding requirement of the Federal award. Applicants who propose to voluntarily cost share must include the costs/contributions on the SF-424, SF-424A Budget Information form, and Budget Detail.

If an applicant proposed voluntary cost share the following apply:

1. A voluntary cost share is subject to the match provisions in the grant regulations ([2 CFR 200.306](#)).
2. A voluntary cost share may only be met with eligible and allowable costs.
3. The recipient may not use other sources of federal funds to meet a voluntary cost share unless the statute authorizing the other federal funding provides that the federal funds may be used to meet a cost share requirement on a federal grant.
4. The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget because the grant agreement includes the voluntary cost share.

3. Program Description

A. Purpose, Priorities, and Activities

The EPA's South Florida Program supports projects within the 16 counties that overlap with the South Florida Water Management District. Demonstration projects that generate tangible and practical results through applied science frameworks that seek to advance and scale future interventions will be prioritized. Projects should also include scientifically and statistically rigorous studies, surveys, research, investigations, or pre- and post-monitoring data collection and dissemination where appropriate, to

effectively evaluate project outcomes and develop subsequent research questions that inform and improve decision making by the Agency and its partners working to restore water quality and aquatic habitat within the South Florida ecosystem.

A demonstration project must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches where the results of the project will be measured and disseminated for public knowledge and use. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge will not qualify as a demonstration for this solicitation.

Between Fiscal Years 2019 and 2024, the EPA funded 92 projects with over \$37 million in South Florida Program Grants. Figure 1 depicts the approximate locations of projects funded over this time. An interactive tool showing projects that EPA previously funded under these priority areas is available at the [South Florida Program website](#).

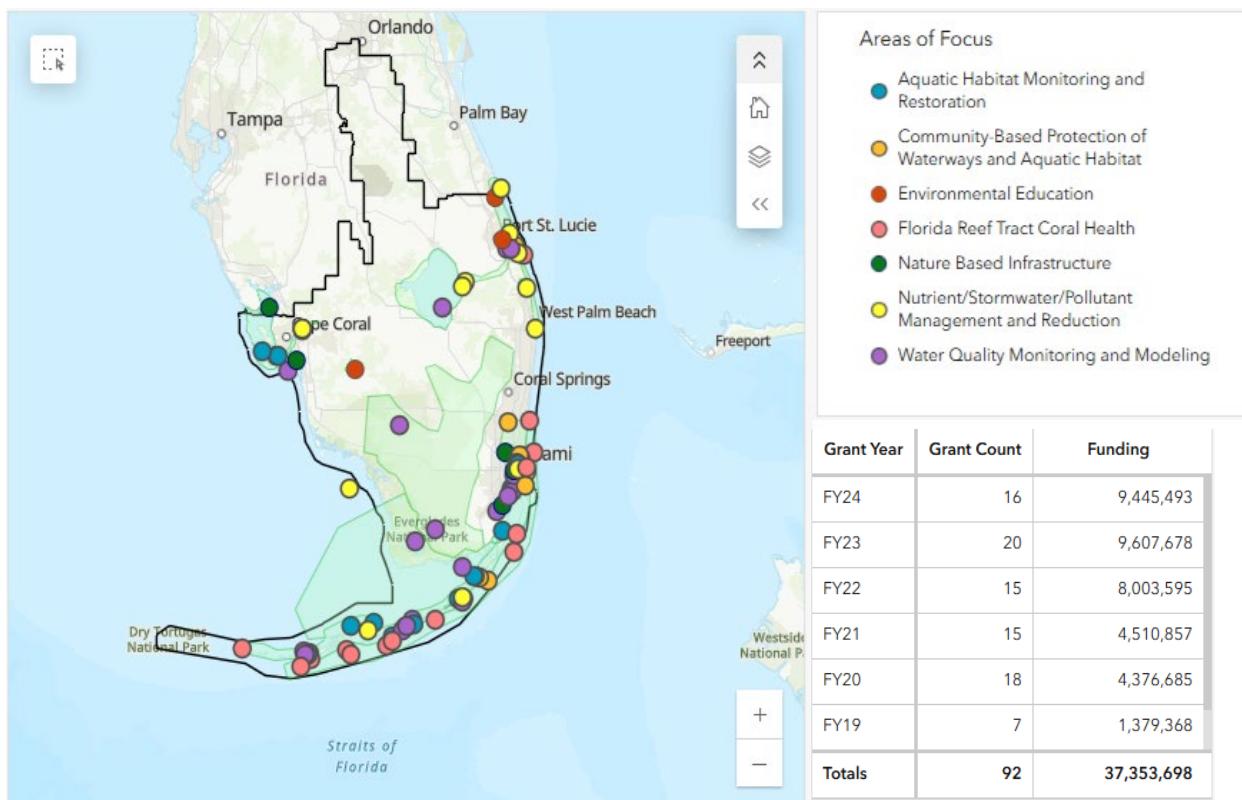


Figure 1. Map showing the boundaries of the SFP, approximate location of funded projects and total dollar amounts from 2018-2024.

Table 1 provides the number of projects funded over FY2019 through FY2024 for each subbasin within the South Florida Program area.

Table 1. Project numbers in geographic areas within south Florida.

Location	Number of Grants
Biscayne Bay	23
Caloosahatchee	8
Everglades	2
Florida Bay	5
Florida Keys (broad)	5
Florida Keys (specific locale)	23
Florida's Coral Reef	16
Immokalee	1
Indian River Lagoon	10
Lake Okeechobee	2
South Florida (broad)	3

(1) Outputs and Outcomes

Applicants are required to describe how funding will help EPA achieve outputs and outcomes in their responses to the criteria in Section 6. Outputs and outcomes specific to each project will be identified as deliverables in the negotiated workplan if the application is selected for award. Recipients will be expected to report progress toward the attainment of expected project outputs and outcomes during the project performance period. Outputs and outcomes are defined as follows:

Outputs are an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced or provided over time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during the project period. The expected outputs for the grants awarded under these guidelines may include but are not limited to:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of efforts to reduce or eliminate sources of pollution and to evaluate progress toward achieving and maintaining water quality and protecting and restoring habitat and other living resources.
- Characterization of sources and causes of water quality impairment that will allow the development of management/action/restoration plan(s).

- Development of quantifiable metrics to evaluate progress towards restoring waters and aquatic habitat.
- Preparation and timely delivery of annual and final performance reports that document results of the special study project.
- Preparation and timely delivery and sharing of research findings through presentations and publications to benefit the public.
- Development of training materials and tools to help state, tribal, territory and local government decisionmakers integrate ecological protection and restoration into watershed planning.
- Development of strategies that consider resilience (hazard mitigation/flood/drought) planning into habitat restoration and protection.

Annual performance reports and a final performance report will also be a required output, as specified in [Section 9.A\(3\)](#) of this announcement, “Reporting Requirements.”

Outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out the activities under the grant. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic; must be qualitative or quantitative; and may not necessarily be achievable during the project period. The EPA anticipates the outcomes from the projects awarded under this announcement will lead to an increase in the capacity to:

- Improve water quality and aquatic habitats in the project area.
- Develop and implement action plans, strategies, and/or innovations to scale-up efforts to restore Florida’s Coral Reef, water quality in the Everglades, and quantity and quality of seagrass, sponge, oyster, or mangrove habitats.
- Reduce pollutant loading to waters in the project area.
- Improve and/or expand habitat inventories and baseline condition assessments.
- Improve data for modeling potential hydrologic change, ecosystem/biogeographic shifts, ecological resource losses or gains on the landscape that can be used to inform management efforts and the public.
- Develop and implement action plans that will reduce pollutant loading and result in improved protection of communities and natural resources.
- Increase knowledge concerning negative impacts of pollutants on water quality and living biological resources and their habitats.
- Increase understanding of an aquatic habitat’s condition for a variety of uses/functions.
- Increase understanding of an aquatic habitat’s ecologic condition and/or function at population scales (i.e., community or regional).
- Increase understanding of the impacts of hazards/flooding/drought and/or resilience-building actions in watersheds, including on traditional and cultural uses.
-

(2) Priority Areas

Applications must address one or more of the four priority areas listed below and describe how the project outcomes will contribute to practical approaches to protecting and restoring south Florida waters and aquatic habitats. These Priority Areas are derived from Congressional appropriations language, statutory language (see C. Statutory Authority section below), and input received from partners including the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program, South Florida

Ecosystem Restoration Working Group and Scientific Coordination Group, the National Park Service, and local National Estuary Programs.

1. Aquatic Habitat Restoration in South Florida [up to \$1,000,000 per project]

Proposed projects in this category must demonstrate, show proof of concept, or develop innovative approaches to habitat restoration. Restoration should focus on reestablishing, rehabilitating, or enhancing specific environments such as coral reefs (including consideration of reef associated species), oyster reefs, seagrasses (submerged aquatic vegetation), sponges, mangroves, wetlands, or other aquatic ecosystems. As a component of restoration, proposed projects may focus on demonstration of effectiveness of management activities, identification of critical habitats threatened by water quality, evaluation of novel potential sources of habitat degradation, and development of restoration methods and strategies. Habitat restoration projects that link outcomes to measures of ecosystem goods and services to human communities, including productivity of fisheries, flood protection and resilience, or economic benefits, are encouraged.

Innovative approaches to restoring or enhancing the resilience of coral reefs (such as physical structure, coral species diversity balance, invertebrate and other reef associated species presence, etc.) will also be prioritized, including consideration of genetics, species diversity, culturing organisms, and scaling up such approaches for practical application. This may also include strategies for addressing novel diseases, external pressures, and other impacts on reef health. Of particular interest is the investigation and proposal of an approach similar to wetlands mitigation banks for restoration of coral reefs and associated reef species that would accelerate restoration and mitigation efforts. Additionally, interests include the development and testing of innovative structures and field techniques to mitigate the effects of disturbances impacting Florida's Coral Reef to accelerate protection and restoration efforts.

2. Stormwater Pollution/Hypoxia/Muck/Invasive Species Reduction Projects [Up to \$1,000,000 per project]

Proposed projects in this category may propose and demonstrate activities to mitigate the impacts of stormwater pollution, hypoxic conditions, sedimentation and muck, and invasive species in human-dominated aquatic habitat like canals and ditches. This could include master planning, restoration demonstration projects and design, or pilot projects proving or testing feasibility or efficacy of innovative technologies. Pre- and post-monitoring to evaluate effectiveness of mitigation or restoration techniques should be included in project design where appropriate, and project components related to education and community outreach are encouraged.

In addition, stormwater pollution projects may research and test technologies and methods for underground injection or aquifer recharge to support ecological flows, including baseflow and direct discharges of recovered water, with a focus on cost effective treatment of water prior to recharge or underground injection to protect the quality of aquifers and surface waters.

3. Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) [up to \$500,000 per project]

Proposed projects in this category should focus on targeted questions and applied control efforts that support the development of tools for preventing, mitigating, and reducing HABs such as sargassum, red tide, or microcystins/cyanobacteria using novel scientific approaches or technologies.

4. Water Quality and Aquatic Habitat Monitoring and Modeling [up to \$500,000 per project]

Proposed projects in this category must develop new or apply accepted models or conduct alternative analyses to investigate the connectivity between waters, aquatic habitat, and/or key biological populations in South Florida. Potential examples include:

- loading analyses and evaluations to assess the relative contribution of local sources of nitrogen and phosphorus to nearshore waters (e.g., wastewater, stormwater, vessels, legacy septic systems, upwelling, rainwater), and should include evaluation of and plans to implement potential corrective actions or applicable Best Management Practices;
- identifying and assessing the transport and movement of contaminants or their indicators to and between groundwater systems and their outflows with the aim of producing practical solutions for reducing the contaminants; and
- site selection, planning, and/or monitoring networks to support priority aquatic habitat restoration (e.g., coral reefs).

Projects that link modeling to measures of ecosystem goods and services provided to human communities, including productivity of fisheries, flood protection and resilience, or economic benefits, are encouraged.

(3) Partnerships

The EPA strongly encourages applicants to identify all partnerships within their scope of work that support the priority or priorities addressed in their application. Please see Section 6 of this announcement for the evaluation criterion that addresses partnerships. As part of the application evaluation, the EPA will consider the mutual interests of each partner(s), how partnering with these entities will catalyze achievement of the project goals, relationships that aid in disseminating the outputs of the project, and whether partners will contribute monetary and/or in-kind effort for the project.

For projects selected within the geographic area of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS), the grantee should anticipate coordination and collaboration with the EPA Region 4 and the FKNMS Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP) during performance of the activity to support achievement of the WQPP program goals. The successful applicant will be expected to participate and present project updates at the FKNMS Water Quality Protection Program meetings. As such, if necessary, applicants should include and identify travel funds in the budget to attend these biannual meetings, typically held in Marathon, FL.

B. Program Goals and Objectives

The activities to be funded under this funding announcement support Pillars 1 and 3: Clean water for Every American and Permitting Reform, Cooperative Federalism, and Cross-Agency Partnership of [EPA's "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative](#).

The mission of the EPA South Florida Program is to successfully implement and integrate federal water quality and wetlands programs to enhance the protection and restoration of Florida's Coral Reef, the Everglades, and associated seagrass meadow, mangrove, and wetland habitats, as well as the economically valuable finfish and shellfish fisheries and recreational activities that the unique South Florida ecosystem supports.

C. Statutory Authority

The EPA issues South Florida Program grants as cooperative agreements under statutory authorities derived from and aligned with:

1. The Sanctuaries Act of 1990 provides direct statutory authority for the South Florida Program. This Act acknowledges the need to address water quality concerns that impact South Florida's waters.
2. Section 528(f) of the Water Resources and Development Act of 1996 establishes the Administrator (or designee) as a member of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and directs member agencies to "coordinate the development of consistent policies, strategies, plans, programs, projects, activities, and priorities for addressing the restoration, preservation, and protection of the South Florida ecosystem."
3. The Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, as amended, that codified the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and establishes the Administrator as a member with direction to jointly "coordinate... activities regarding the mapping, monitoring, research, conservation, mitigation, and restoration of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems."
4. Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act Section provides additional administrative direction for this solicitation. This section authorizes the EPA to award assistance agreements for water quality and watershed management including demonstrations, studies, surveys, education, and research.
5. Congressional appropriations language identifies programmatic areas and resourcing for EPA to consider, including locations, and priority topics for the program. The FY2025 Congressional Explanatory Statement provides the following recommendations on funding selections:

The Committees recommend at least \$2,000,000 to monitor coral health in south Florida; \$1,150,000 to enhance water quality and seagrass monitoring in the Caloosahatchee Estuary and Indian River Lagoon, especially with respect to assessing the impact of Lake Okeechobee discharges and harmful algal blooms; \$1,150,000 to enhance water quality and seagrass monitoring in Florida Bay and Biscayne Bay, especially with respect to assessing the impact of Everglades Restoration projects and harmful algal blooms; and \$1,000,000 for the expansion of the water quality and ecosystem health monitoring and prediction network which will use vetted, modern procedures for long-term monitoring of Florida waters, including Molecular, Algal, Ocean Floor, and Seagrasses.

6. Additional funds through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) may also be used to supplement South Florida Program awards, if available.

D. Funding Type

It is anticipated that cooperative agreements will be funded under this funding opportunity.

Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project and Technical Officers and the selected applicant(s) in the performance of the work supported. Although the 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 (the EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient);
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient); and
- requests to present in local scientific conferences.

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

E. Quality Assurance

Authority: Quality Assurance applies to all assistance agreements involving environmental information as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 1500.12 Quality Assurance. The recipient shall ensure that subawards involving environmental information issued under this agreement include appropriate quality requirements for the work. The recipient shall ensure sub-award recipients develop and implement the Quality Assurance (QA) planning documents in accordance with this term and condition; and/or ensure sub-award recipients implement all applicable approved QA planning documents.

All work funded by EPA that involves the collection, generation, evaluation or use of environmental information and/or the design, construction, operation, or application of environmental technology shall be implemented in accordance with an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). The QAPP will be developed using a systematic planning process based on the graded approach. No work covered by this requirement shall be implemented without an approved QAPP available prior to the start of the work except under circumstances requiring immediate action to protect human health and the environment or operations conducted under police powers.

Quality Assurance Project Plan / Quality Management Plan (QAPP/QMP)

1. Prior to beginning environmental information operations, the recipient must:
 - a. Develop a QAPP/QMP utilizing the QAPP/QMP checklist provided by Region 4 Project Officer (PO) and Technical Officer (TO),
 - b. Prepare QAPP in accordance with the most current version of the EPA QMP Standard (CIO 2105-S-01) and the EPA QAPP Standard (CIO 2105-S-02),
 - c. Submit the document to EPA Project Officer or Technical Officer for review assignment and,
 - d. Obtain EPA Quality Assurance Manager or Designated Approving official (DAO) approval.
2. The recipient must submit the QAPP/QMP no more than 90 days after grant award.
3. The recipient shall notify the PO or TO when substantive changes are needed to the QAPP/QMP. Substantive changes require the QAPP be revised and resubmitted to EPA for review and approval.
4. The recipient must review their approved QAPP at least annually and document the review. The recipient must provide written notification to the PO/TO that the annual review has been completed and state whether or not revisions are required.
5. EPA-approved QAPPs shall be valid for no more than five years or shorter duration as may be defined in the extramural agreement, after 5 years, the QAPP must be revised, reissued, or closed out.

For Reference:

[EPA 2023 Quality Management Plan \(QMP\) Standard](#) and [EPA 2023 QAPP Standard](#); contain quality specifications for EPA and non-EPA organizations and definitions applicable to these terms and conditions.

[EPA QA/G-5: Guidance for Quality Assurance Project Plans](#), Appendix C provides a QAPP Checklist.

[EPA's Quality Program website](#) has a list of QA managers, and Quality Specifications for non-EPA Organizations to do business with EPA.

[The Office of Grants and Debarment Quality Assurance Requirements](#).

4. Application Contents and Format

A. Application Forms

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: use this to submit your Project Narrative

Optional Documents:

6. Other Attachments Form: Use this to submit other attachments, if applicable
 - a. Biographies and letters of support, if applicable
 - b. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable
 - c. Lobbying Form, if applicable
7. Budget Narrative Attachment Form

B. Applicants Using Contractors

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.

Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a “partner” or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements. If an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application, it does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements.

The 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 provides documentation that it has complied with these requirements.

For additional guidance, applicants should review [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#), [EPA's Subaward Policy](#), and [EPA's Subaward Policy Frequent Questions](#). The EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500 as well as the EPA's rule on Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in EPA Programs in 40 CFR Part 33.

C. Release Copies of Applications

Copies of applications submitted under this NOFO are not going to be posted publicly. General information about grantee, amount, and title will be shared on the [South Florida Program website](#), once awarded.

Applicants should:

- clearly indicate which portion(s) of the application are confidential, privileged, or sensitive information, or
- state 'n/a' or 'not applicable' if the application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information;
- not include trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is confidential or privileged, or sensitive information that would invade another individual's personal privacy (e.g., an individual's salary, personal email addresses, etc.);
- be aware that if such information is included, it will be treated in accordance with 40 CFR § 2.203.

D. Coalition Coverage

A coalition is formed when two or more eligible applicants coordinate to submit a single application. Coalitions must identify which single eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will receive subawards from the recipient (the "pass-through entity"). The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to the EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in [2 CFR 200.1](#) and comply with the [EPA's Subaward Policy](#).

For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards under this grant program but may receive procurement contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 CFR 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants. Refer to the [Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a "partner" or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements.

E. Project Narrative

Application Information

To simplify the review process, obtain the maximum degree of comparison, and provide a fair and equitable evaluation of applications, reviewers will rely on the content of the entire application for

evaluation purposes. Therefore, it is important that all applications are complete and substantially comply with the standard format as described in detail in this Section. For completeness of your grant application, please refer to the Application Submission Checklist ([Appendix A](#)). In addition to the forms listed in [Section 4.A](#), each application **must** consist of the following components below:

1. Application Cover Page (see Appendix B for a sample)
2. A one-page project application summary (single spaced)
3. Application Proposal (16-page maximum double spaced)
4. Attachments (14-page maximum)

(1) Formatting Instructions

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.

The application proposal should be readable in PDF or MS Word and consolidated into a single file. In addition to addressing the components listed below, applicants should ensure their application also addresses the evaluation criteria listed in [Section 6.B](#) of this solicitation.

The application proposal must be no more than sixteen (16) double-spaced 8.5 x 11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper). The page limit does not include documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below. Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. Additional pages beyond the 16-page limit will not be reviewed. If a single-spaced application is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 16-page double-spaced page limit for applications [eight (8) single-spaced pages are the equivalent of the 16-page double-spaced application page limit]. Any excess pages, whether single or double spaced, will not be reviewed. Attachments may not exceed 14 pages, please reference Section 4.E(1).12 "Attachments," for more details.

Application proposals that do not substantially comply with the requirements above may be deemed ineligible.

It is recommended that applications follow the format as described below:

1. Application Proposal

- a. Situation, Need, and Previous Efforts - Discuss notable gaps in knowledge or capabilities, why the proposed project should be performed, review significant work by yourself or by others in the proposed area of interest (include reference citations). Describe how this project relates to long-term management strategies.
- b. Objective(s) - State what is to be studied, measured, observed or developed, and the anticipated results. State hypotheses, as relevant, that the proposed special study is designed to test.
- c. Practical applications, Benefits, and Importance - Describe how the anticipated products and results, will contribute to expected benefits and their utility to the priority action items and/or resource managers.

2. Methods and Approach

- a. Description of Major Tasks – Clearly describe tasks that must be performed to accomplish the objective(s) and describe each task. State the tasks in the same order as the hypotheses they are designed to test. Experimental design must be described with statistical tests, if applicable, for hypotheses proposed. All projects collecting data will be required to submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan, or QAPP, to the EPA for approval prior to collection of data.
- b. Environmental Impact - State and explain any potential short-term impacts that your project will have on the environment, including the type and duration such as water quality and sample collection impacts.

3. Project Management

- a. Administration - Describe the administrative responsibilities and authority of the Principal Investigator.
- b. Roles and Responsibilities - Describe the team composition (including names and affiliations of key individuals) and the assignments of team members to major tasks. Provide specific estimates of the time each member will work on the project.

4. Support Requirements and Conditions

- a. Permit or Cooperation Required - Proposed projects must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance. If a permit(s) or clearances from any government agency or organization is required for execution of the project please provide the name of the agency, the method of obtaining the clearance or permit, and the time required or state "none."
- b. Data or Facility Access - If access is required to data or facilities held by another organization, please identify the data or facility, the nature and type of access required, the methods of obtaining such access, and the effect of being denied access or state "none."

5. Project Schedule

- a. Milestone and Deliverable Schedule - Provide a project schedule to include all milestones and deliverables for each task listed in the "Description of Major Tasks" Section. Describe what items of data are to be delivered. State the format in which data will be presented. Provide a monthly or quarterly schedule for all deliverables.
- b. Each project requires two types of reports from the principal investigator, an Annual Performance Report and a Final Performance Report to include accomplishments and deliverables as outlined in the approved scope of work. Applicants should include these reports in their proposed project deliverables, as described below.
- c. The principal investigator shall provide Annual Performance Reports to the Project Officer and Technical Officer by December 31st of each year. These reports will consist of updates on progress toward work objectives, justification, approach, results to date, any problems encountered, actions taken to resolve problems, discussion of remaining tasks and expenditures to date. Principal investigators shall prepare a draft final report summarizing the objectives, methods, approach, results, and significance of the study.

The draft final report will be reviewed by the Technical Officer, Elizabeth Smith, and returned with comments. The principal investigator will address the comments and submit a final report to Mr. Ade Adesiji at adesiji.adekunle@epa.gov and Ms. Elizabeth Smith at smith.elizabeth@epa.gov.

6. Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes, and Results (see [Section 3.A\(1\)](#))

- a. Outputs (project products) - List the outputs expected to be produced through the completion of the proposed project;
- b. Outcomes (project objectives) - List the outcomes of the project to be accomplished as a result of the project outputs;
- c. Tracking Outputs and Outcomes - Describe your approach for measuring and tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes.

7. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements, such as Federal grants and cooperative agreements (not Federal contracts), that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements, if available) and describe:

- a. whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and
- b. 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
- c. 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, the EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).

If 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.

8. Budget Summary

This section of the application must provide a detailed narrative and itemization, by cost category, of the proposed budget including total federal funds and leveraging, cost share or match contributions. This section must include a detailed and itemized list and description of how the funds will be used. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, subawards, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs as part of the proposal narrative and detailed budget table as part of the Appendices.

If the project budget includes leveraging, cost-share, or match the Budget Summary and table within the narrative must include a detailed description. If the EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost-share, applicants must meet their sharing commitment as a legal condition of receiving the EPA funding. If the proposed cost-share is to be provided by a third-party, a letter of commitment is required. Any form of cost-share or match included in the Budget Detail must also be included on the SF424 and SF-424A forms. Please see [Section 2.B](#) of this NOFO for more detailed information.

For more guidance on preparing a budget, applicants should refer to the [Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#), as described in [RAIN-2019-G02](#).

Please provide information regarding how your indirect costs were derived based on your budget total (which categories used to derive indirect costs). For more information about Indirect Cost please reference IDC Policy/guidance: [RAIN-2018-G02-R2](#).

If your entity proposes to use undergrad, graduate, or doctoral students, and they are not deemed “employees” of your entity and receive a 1099, please ensure you place the costs and details under the OTHER category as [Participant Support Costs](#).

If your entity proposes to use undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral students and they are deemed “employees” of your entity and receive a W-2, please ensure you place the costs and details under the PERSONNEL category.

9. Partnership with other entities

Describe your approach for promoting and/or developing partnerships and support from the public and private sectors in performing the project. List the proposed groups that will be involved in the project and any related projects and studies, how their involvement addresses the common goals of South Florida Program priorities, and what each of the groups’ roles will be in the project’s staffing, funding, design, and implementation. Describe the type of partnerships/support proposed, how you will ensure that it will materialize during project performance, and what role it will play in the overall project. Describe how you will coordinate activities of the project with related or complementary projects and studies.

Letters of support are strongly encouraged and must address the mutual interests and involvement in the project. Partnerships documented with letters of support may receive a more favorable score under the partnership review criterion described in [Section 6.B](#). Please attach your letters of support within the Attachments area. If you are addressing the partnership within the application only, then it must be included as part of the 16-page limit. Applicants that do not plan on partnering with other agencies or groups should demonstrate how they will be able to effectively perform and complete the project without such partnerships.

Under this section, the applicant should explain their plans for making subawards, as necessary and appropriate (see [Sections 4.B](#) and [4.D](#)) to enhance project effectiveness and/or efficiency. An example would be a proposal by an applicant (a single entity) to use EPA funding to make subawards to one or more identified governmental agency, institute of high education, or nonprofit subrecipients that would work collaboratively with the applicant to implement an overarching plan. Applicants, not EPA, will select their subrecipients and the applicant must demonstrate in its proposal and/or through letters of support that the project partners are willing to accept the subaward and have the capacity to effectively administer and perform the agreement. Selected applicants who propose to make subawards must

follow proper procedures in making subawards and will be expected to make the subawards consistent with their proposal. The award will include a term and condition requiring the applicant to make the subawards consistent with their proposal.

10. Information Transfer

Describe the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results (outputs/outcomes), lessons learned, and/or methods development. Examples include: presentations of results at appropriate forums, conducting webinars or other outreach targeted to relevant audiences, sharing results on a website and sharing the website address with relevant organizations.

11. Literature Cited

References used in the application narrative (not to exceed one page).

12. Attachments (are not included as part of the 16-page application proposal limit)

Not to exceed 14 total pages, attachments may be used to provide biographies and qualifications, technical backup material to the text, details of computation, and other pertinent information. Techniques or methodologies, if critical to the successful completion of the research, should be discussed in detail within the application text (16-page limit). Do not attach copies of any journal articles or other applications to your submittal.

- a. Letters of Support - Attach all letters of support from partners describing the nature of support and any active involvement with the project.
- b. Biographies and Qualifications - Provide a brief biography for each team member that highlights education, experience, and publications related to the proposed project. Curriculum vitae must not exceed one- page single space per person.

NOTE: Applications that do not follow the required format may be deemed ineligible and not reviewed.

13. Leveraging

The EPA will evaluate proposals based on a leveraging criterion as described in [Section 6.B.](#)

Leveraging is generally when an applicant proposes to provide additional funds or resources from third party sources to support or complement the project, they are awarded under the competition which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds awarded. Any leveraged funds or resources, and their source, must be identified in the application.

Leveraging should not be included in the budget and the costs need not be eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement. The grant application should include a statement indicating that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's application. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, the EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their applications. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then the EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 CFR 200.

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

A. Submission Dates and Times

March 16, 2026 11:59 pm ET Application Submission Deadline

March 16, 2026 11:59PM ET Application Submission Deadline (Local Time)

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application. If you submit the same application more than once, we will accept the last on-time submission.

B. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. SAM.gov will provide a UEI for your organization, which is required to apply for grants using Grants.gov. To register, go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and click Get Started. From the same page, you can also click on the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for the information you will need to register. Make sure you are current with SAM.gov and UEI requirements before applying for the award.

SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. [Begin that process today.](#)

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with [Grants.gov](#). You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

Please visit [How to Register to Apply for Grants](#) for additional information.

C. Submission Instructions

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. See Section 5.B. above for information on getting registered.

Important tips:

- 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.
- See the Quick Start Guide for Applicants for instructions on how to submit.
- Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks.
- Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.
- Your application must be submitted by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance.
- If you receive an error or the 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.
- See Grants.gov Errors for information on other Grants.gov errors.
- 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.

D. 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:

- Contact Grants.gov Support Center before the application deadline date.
- Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- Send an email with the **EPA-I-R4-SFL-2025-01** in the subject line to Ade Adesiji at adesiji.adekunle@epa.gov and Jennifer Shadle at shadle.jennifer@epa.gov before the application deadline time and date and must include the following:
 - Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
 - Description of the issue
 - The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, the 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.

Applicants with limited or no access to the internet may request an exception by following the procedures outlined [here](#). The request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods.

E. Intergovernmental Review

The application is not subject to Intergovernmental Review.

6. Application Review Information

A. Responsiveness Review

Applications must meet the threshold criteria requirements described in [Section 2](#) to be evaluated. Applicants not meeting these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will be notified within 15 calendar days of the determination.

- Applications must adhere to the page limit requirements. Any pages over the limit(s) in [Section 4](#) will not be reviewed.
- Initial applications must be submitted *on or before* the application deadline through Grants.gov or through limited circumstances as expressed in [Section 5](#). The EPA will not evaluate applications that are not submitted on time.
- *Technical difficulties applying:* Applicants having technical difficulties applying must contact the Grants.gov hotline at 1-800-518-4726 and then must email a PDF of the full application to the EPA contact listed in [Section 1](#). The submission must be received prior to the application deadline for consideration.

B. Review Criteria

Criteria Name and Description	Points
<p>Rationale and Relevance to Management</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposed project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Identifies and addresses one or more of the four Priority Areas, listed in Section 3.A(2). B. Describes how results and outputs will be applied to identifying and solving problems within the south Florida ecosystem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes how the project meets EPA's "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative's Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American, and, as applicable, Pillar 3: Permitting Reform, Cooperative Federalism, and Cross-Agency Partnership. 	20
<p>Merit</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on how well the project advances applied science and knowledge within the south Florida ecosystem to assist decision making processes and based on the applicability of the final product to addressing existing water quality and aquatic habitat concerns.</p> <p>Components contributing to the merit review include a background of the project, statement of the purpose, significance of the study, research question and design, methodology, hypotheses, project assumptions and limitations, anticipated findings and applicability of outcomes or products.</p>	20
<p>Past Performance Evaluation</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Past performance in successfully completing and managing other assistance agreements identified in the application; B. History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified, 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 toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported the reasons; C. History of whether the applicant journal publications or author manuscripts associated with the journal publications and the associated underlying scientific research data and metadata resulting from the assistance agreements identified were made publicly accessible, and if not, whether the applicant adequately 	10

<p>explained the reasons, or the applicant explained why the requirement does not apply;</p> <p>D. Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project; and</p> <p>E. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project or the ability to obtain the needed expertise, knowledge and resources.</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items, A, B, and C of this Past Performance 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 the applicant does not have relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application, and the committee will apply a neutral score for these subfactors (items A, B, and C 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, the committee may apply a score of 0 for these factors</p>	
<p>Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes and Tracking</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the proposed project plan to generate the anticipated outputs and outcomes, including the extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Additionally, applications will be evaluated based on the proposed plan for sharing scientific data and/or outcomes publicly (e.g., through publications or uploads to databases). <i>Applicants should refer to, and consult, the Unified Monitoring Framework and ongoing efforts of the Florida's Coral Reef Coordination Team (https://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/frcrt) for guidance in the development of water quality and biological or ecological monitoring data, as applicable to the geographic range of the proposed project.</i></p>	15
<p>Milestone Schedule, Budget and Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the ability of the project to be successfully completed within the time frames discussed in this announcement by providing a clearly articulated milestone schedule that covers each year of the entire grant period. This includes a breakout of the project tasks into phases with associated tasks and interim milestones, deliverables and final products, and anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task. The table should include annual progress reporting to EPA.</p> <p>Applications will also be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the applicant presents a detailed budget that is <u>reasonable</u>, <u>allowable</u>, <u>allocable</u>, cost-effective and adequate to carry out the proposed project. Applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and</p>	15

<p>internal controls for ensuring that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner while preventing waste, fraud, and abuse.</p> <p>A. Budget Table – This should be easy to understand and should link the expenses to the tasks and deliverables from the project narrative.</p> <p>B. Budget Narrative – This is used to provide a description of costs not easily understandable in the budget table.</p> <p>Evaluation will consider the organizational overhead (indirect costs), direct costs and ability to control costs versus anticipated results.</p> <p>Note: The budget should indicate which tasks can be scaled down or removed to reduce overall budget requests as the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions of proposed projects.</p>	
<p>Leveraging</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the extent the project will leverage other funds or resources beyond the grant award to support the proposed project activities. This includes but is not limited to funds and resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education, and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Applications will also be evaluated based on the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how they will obtain the leveraged resources, reasonableness of costs and the value of in-kind contributions, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds or resources will play in supporting the performance and success of the proposed project.</p>	7.5
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the extent partnerships will be used to effectively and efficiently implement the proposed project. This includes coordination with other projects or activities being performed by the applicant or others that will result in a greater positive environmental impact. Descriptions may include an applicant's plans for obtaining collaboration and support from the public and private sectors in performing the project, the scope of the partnership(s) (including the diversity/variety and number of partners), the type of collaboration proposed, the likelihood that it will materialize during project performance and what role partners will play in the overall project.</p>	7.5
<p>Information Transfer</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results (outputs/outcomes, procedures, suitability, and data), lessons learned, and/or methods developed to appropriate stakeholders. This includes efforts to improve environmental literacy regarding protecting and restoring water quality, community outreach regarding the ecosystem goods and services provided by</p>	5

South Florida's aquatic habitats, and targeted teaching/training opportunities to share lessons learned from project implementation.	
--	--

Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate that they have the capability to successfully perform the project as described in [Section 3](#) of this funding opportunity.

Only eligible entities whose applications meet the threshold criteria in [Section 2](#) of this announcement will be evaluated. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative.** Each application will be rated using a point system.

Applications will be evaluated based on a total of 100 possible points.

C. Review and Selection Process

Threshold reviews are completed for all applications received. These reviews are based on the eligibility criteria listed in Section 2. Eligible applications are then reviewed, evaluated and scored by a panel of EPA employees consisting of three reviewers per application, based on the priority criteria identified in the NOFO. Each reviewer, including the threshold reviewer, the Panel Chair, and Selection Official sign a statement that he/she has no conflict of interest, and these records are maintained in each grant file.

After each reviewer completes their individual reviews of each application against the criterion, the reviewers assign points based on the degree to which each criterion is met. The Panel Chair meets with the panel to discuss each proposal with a focus on any scores where individual reviewers differed by more than 20 points. Reviewers have the opportunity to adjust their scores based on any new information from the panel discussion and a justification for the adjustment is included in the evaluation form. The individual reviewer scores are averaged for a final score that is then ranked. There are no changes to individual scores or overall ranking after the panel discussion. The ranked scores are shared with the Region 4 Water Division Director, the Selection Official, for the final selection decision. The Selection Official may consider one or more of the following other evaluation factors in making the final selection.

(1) Other Evaluation Factors

Final funding decisions will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider the following factors:

- Geographic distribution of funding
- Selection of priority activities over other assistance activities (Programmatic/Agency Priorities)
- Number and size of awards
- Similarity of the project to other EPA-funded projects
- Funding source
- Congressional language regarding distribution

D. Risk Review

The EPA will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov., when doing the risk review as required by [2 CFR 200.206](#).

7. Award Notices

The EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made by Region 4's Water Grants Administration Section Manager. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by Region 4's Grants Management Office. Selection does not guarantee an award will be made. Statutory authorization, funding, or other issues during the award process may affect the ability of the EPA to make an award. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms, which must be approved by the EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The recipient and any sub-recipient must comply with the applicable [General Terms and Conditions](#). These terms and conditions are in addition to the assurances and certifications made as part of the award, terms and conditions, and restrictions reflected on the official assistance award document.

Awards issued as a result of this funding opportunity are subject to the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Title [2 CFR Part 200](#) and [2 CFR Part 1500](#).

B. Reporting

[EPA's General Terms and Conditions](#) in the Notice of Award will have information on performance and financial reports, including:

- How often you will report.
- Any required form or formatting.
- How to submit them.

C. Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting

The Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires:

- Data entry in SAM.gov for all subawards and subcontracts you issue for \$30,000 or more.
- Reporting executive compensation for both recipient and subaward organizations.

9. Other Information

A. Additional Provisions for Applicants

Additional provisions that apply this funding opportunity and/or awards made under this funding opportunity, can be found at [EPA NOFO Clauses](#). If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact to obtain the provisions.

(1) Award Information

a. Partial Funding

In appropriate circumstances, the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If the EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the proposed objectives, while maintaining the integrity of the competition and selection process.

b. Projects And Award Amounts

The EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and funding amount of awards under each priority or change the ratio of assistance agreements it awards among the priorities.

The anticipated award amounts and the relative allocations for the South Florida Program priorities are approximations that are subject to change based upon several considerations including, but not limited to, the EPA's determination that different amounts or allocations would better advance protection and restoration of the south Florida ecosystems, funding availability, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.

c. Pre-Award Costs

Unless pre-award costs are specifically approved by the EPA, recipients should not incur project costs, including non-federal match, until they receive an award document from the EPA.

d. Project Period

The EPA recommends project start dates in the timeframe of June 1, 2026 to September 1, 2026. Proposed project and budget periods can range from two to seven years for this funding announcement.

e. Additional Awards

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

(2) Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at [Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures](#). Note, the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remain unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in [2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E](#).

(3) Reporting Requirements

Per [2 CFR 200.328](#) Monitoring and Reporting requirements, recipients will be required to submit annual performance reports on December 31 until the grant expiration. The performance reports shall consist of updates on progress toward work objectives, justification, approach, results to date, any problems encountered, actions taken to resolve problems, discussion of remaining tasks, and expenditures to date.

Recipients of federal assistance agreements will be required to submit a draft final report that summarizes the objectives, methods, approach, results, and significance of each project or study. The draft final report will be reviewed by the EPA project officer and technical officer and returned with comments. The recipient of the federal assistance agreement will address the comments and submit a final report to the EPA project officer with revisions. The final report will be due within 120 days of the project and budget period end date.

(4) Data Management

Each recipient of a federal assistance agreement for monitoring and special studies projects will work with the designated data management entity to define data entry conventions and issues. All original and ancillary data produced under the monitoring and special studies programs will be generated, processed, stored and archived in a manner that provides detailed documentation of the procedures used during all stages of data collection, reduction, processing, analysis, and storage. Federally funded monitoring data must be submitted to the [EPA Water Quality Exchange \(WQX\)](#) and the [Florida Watershed Information Network \(WIN\)](#), if applicable.

(5) Publications

Recipients of federal assistance agreements for special studies are expected to submit manuscripts on the funded projects to appropriate scientific journals within one year of the completion of the final report. Recipients of federal assistance agreements for monitoring projects are expected to submit manuscripts to appropriate scientific journals at an appropriate time during and/or after the completion of the project. The appropriate time for submission of manuscripts will be negotiated with the EPA project officer. Authors are expected to cite support from the specific sponsor of their project or study in all publications resulting wholly or partially from sponsored activities. For example, an appropriate acknowledgment would be as follows:

This project/study was funded by a federal assistance agreement from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to assistance Number EPA-I R4-SFL-2025-01.

Reprints of any abstract, article or other publication that result from this sponsored project or study should be sent to the EPA project officer.

(6) Public Relations

Official press releases on projects may be prepared by the EPA Region 4 and/or FKNMS staff to be used by all recipients of federal assistance agreements for distribution to the news media. Principal investigators are not prohibited from discussing their projects with news media; however, principal investigators should notify the EPA project officer of any contacts with the news media regarding special studies projects funded via federal assistance agreements.

(7) Combining Applications Into One Award

If an applicant submits applications for multiple tasks/activities under this competition, and is selected for multiple tasks/activities, the EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines separate applications for different tasks/activities.

(8) Nonprofit Administrative Capability Clause

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c, and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8: EPA's Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards. In addition, non-profit applicants selected for awards over \$200,000 may be required to fill out and submit to the grants management office EPA Form 6600.09, United States Environmental Protection Agency Administrative Capability Questionnaire with supporting documents as required in EPA Order 5700.8.

(9) Pre-Budget Webinar

If you are interested in applying for this South Florida Program competitive announcement, EPA Region 4 is offering a pre-budget webinar to discuss requirements and assist in the development of the 424A budget sheet and scope of work budget. Please reach out to Jennifer Shadle at shadle.jennifer@epa.gov no later than date February 5, 2026, for an invitation to the *South Florida Program Developing Your Budget* webinar to be held on February 11, 2026. Also reference the [South Florida Program Funding webpage](#) for webinar information.

APPENDIX A APPLICATION SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Please note that this is to be used at the applicant's convenience in preparing their application. It is not required to be submitted.

Respondent: _____

- 1. Application Checklist
- 2. Application Cover Page along with one-page summary
- 3. Application (16-page double spaced maximum), with all required elements as outlined in Section IV.

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 – Pre-award Compliance Review Report
5. Narrative Application (Project Narrative Attachment Form) - prepared as described in Section IV. A and B of this NOFO

Optional Documents: the following are not required per Grants.gov; however, are required for the EPA to process a selected applicant for award.

1. Other Attachments Form, if applicable
2. Bios and Letters of Support, if applicable
3. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable
4. [Lobbying Form](#), if applicable
5. Detailed budget table with detailed budget category line items as part of the Appendices. This is separate from the narrative budget as part of the proposal.

APPENDIX B APPLICATION COVER PAGE SAMPLE

EPA-I R4-SFL-2025-01

A cover page is required as part of the application package and is not included in the 16-page application limit. This is an example of a cover page.

An application submitted for projects for the South Florida Program:

Project Title: _____

Principal Investigator(s): _____

Date Submitted: _____ **Proposed Start Date:** _____

Total Federal Funding Request: _____

We, the undersigned, certify that, in the event this application is accepted whole or in part, our signatures on this application constitute intended acceptance of and compliance with applicable policy, rules, and regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

ENDORSEMENTS:

Submitted By: Principal Investigator

Approved By: Institutional Representative

Signature

Signature

Typed Name

Typed Name

Title

Title

Address

Address

Phone / Fax

Phone / Fax

Email

Email

For Administrative Detail, Please Contact:

Title

Address

Phone / Fax

Email

APPENDIX C Map Illustrating the Boundaries of the South Florida Program

