U.S. EPA GULF OF MEXICO DIVISION
Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico 2021 Request for Applications

Federal Agency Name:	Environmental Protection Agency
Funding Opportunity Title:	**Multiple;** see below
Announcement Type:	Request for Applications
Funding Opportunity Number:	**Multiple;** see below
Assistance Listing:	**66.475**

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

KEY DATES: All dates listed below are tentative.

June 1, 2021	RFA Posted
June 1, 2021	Please review the recorded webinar, Q&A, and the helpful hints for developing an application, posted at www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico before submitting questions. If the answer needed is not already included in the Q&A, please submit questions to GMP-RFP@epa.gov. Q&A will be updated weekly if new questions are received.
August 6, 2021	Applications due to the Gulf of Mexico Division at 11:59pm ET
October 5, 2021	Anticipated Notification of Selection
February 4, 2022	Anticipated Award

SUMMARY: This Request for Applications (RFA) solicits applications from eligible entities for grants and/or cooperative agreements to be awarded. These awards will improve water quality, habitat, community resilience, and environmental education in the Gulf of Mexico watershed within the Continental United States (see individual funding opportunities for geographic specifications). For a list of projects funded by the Gulf of Mexico Division (GMD) under previous RFAs, please see the EPA Gulf of Mexico story map. EPA is seeking applications for projects within the four funding opportunities listed below, each of which has a separate Funding Opportunity Number (FON) and is separately posted on www.grants.gov. Applicants must apply for the specific funding opportunity they are interested in. The four funding opportunities and associated FONs are:

- **Improving Community Health through Microbial Source Tracking (Refer to Sec. I.E.1)**
  - FON: EPA-GM-2021-MiST
  - Approximately $1,500,000 for 3 to 5 projects
- **Trash Free Waters – Preventing More, Picking Up Less (Refer to Sec. I.E.2)**
  - FON: EPA-GM-2021-TFW
  - Approximately $4,000,000 for 8 to 16 projects
- **Building Community Resilience Through the Reduction and Prevention of Nonpoint Source Pollution (Refer to Sec. I.E.3)**
  - FON: EPA-GM-2021-NPS
  - Approximately $2,000,000 available for 4 to 6 projects
- **STEM Career Development for High School Aged Youth (Refer to Sec. I.E.4)**

- FON: EPA-GM-2021-HSCD
- Approximately $1,500,000 available for 5 projects

FUNDING/AWARDS: Under this RFA, a total of approximately $9 million may be awarded as grants and/or cooperative agreements for approximately 20 -30 projects in the four funding opportunities listed above, contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received and other applicable considerations. In addition, EPA expressly reserves the right to make no awards under a particular funding opportunity or to adjust the number of awards and the amounts originally anticipated under a specific funding opportunity.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: For your convenience, an RFA web page has been created at www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico where you can find information related to the RFA process, including a recorded webinar, frequently asked questions, budget spreadsheet and other information to assist you in developing your application.

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I. APPLICATION INFORMATION

A. Background GMD is a non-regulatory program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) founded to facilitate collaborative actions to protect, maintain, and restore the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico in ways consistent with the economic well-being of the Region. To carry out its mission, GMD continues to maintain and expand partnerships with State and Federal agencies, federally recognized Tribes, local governments and authorities, academia, regional business and industry, agricultural and environmental organizations, and individual citizens and communities. For more information, please see https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico.

B. Scope of Work This request for applications is for multiple funding opportunities. For specific information for each Funding Opportunity, see Section I.E.1-I.E.4.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage, Anticipated Outputs/Outcomes and Performance Measures Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements with the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements).

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment, Objective 1.2 of the EPA Strategic Plan: *Provide for Clean and Safe Water* (https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan). **All applications must be for projects that support the goal and objective identified above.**

2. Environmental Results EPA also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements). Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the priorities described above. See RFA terms for definitions of outputs and outcomes. See Sections I.E.1 through I.E.4 for expected outputs and outcomes under each funding opportunity.

3. Performance Measures The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful processes and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. It is expected that the description of performance measures will directly relate to the project outcomes and outputs. The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the project will achieve?
- How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and

outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

D. Statutory Authority This RFA is expected to result in the award of grants and/or cooperative agreements (hereafter collectively referred to as "grants"), to improve the Gulf of Mexico. GMD's statutory authority to award grants is contained in the Clean Water Act Section 104(b)(3), which authorizes the award of assistance agreements to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. In addition, the Explanatory Statement for H.R. 133, CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021, directs EPA to "coordinate with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Gulf States, and other State, local, and private partners to leverage greater resources toward conservation projects on working-lands within the Gulf Region and Mississippi River Basin."

E. Funding Opportunities

Applications are requested for the funding opportunities described below, each of which has a different FON. There are four separate FONs for which applicants can apply, and each one is separately posted on Grants.gov.

E.1. Improving Community Health through Microbial Source Tracking

FON: EPA-GM-2021-MiST

Funding Opportunity Title: Gulf of Mexico - 2021 Request for Applications – Improving Community Health through Microbial Source Tracking

Scope. This funding opportunity is intended to generate applications for one of the following activities:

- Microbial source tracking studies in watersheds with documented high loads of unidentified fecal coliforms. For the purposes of this RFA, microbial source tracking is defined as an approach used to identify and track sources of fecal contamination impacting water quality in stream, river, lake, and marine (including beaches) ecosystems. Applicants should indicate whether there are resources available to mitigate the impairment once identified. Proposed projects should utilize partnership-based approaches focused on evaluating and protecting water quality.
- Innovative demonstration projects focused on reducing identified point source or nonpoint source fecal pollution in watersheds. Demonstration projects must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. The applicant must clearly explain in the proposal how the technologies, methods, or approaches used are new or experimental and how the project otherwise meets the requirements of a demonstration as described in this RFA. If your project uses technologies, methods or approaches that have been used previously in other geographic areas and/or other situations, then your proposal must include an explanation as to how your demonstration project is different from such prior projects. The applicant must also explain what will be learned from the demonstration project.
- Innovative demonstration projects and simultaneous microbial source tracking for proof of concept. Please refer to how microbial source tracking and demonstration projects are defined above.

Background. Water contamination with fecal material can harbor pathogens, pose risks to human health, and result in significant economic loss due to closure of shellfish harvesting and recreational beaches (Rabinovici et al. 2004). Identifying sources of fecal contamination is important because the level of human health risk can change from one animal source to another. When water quality managers know the sources of fecal contamination, they can develop and prioritize targeted mitigation strategies. Although several water quality methods exist for monitoring fecal contamination, methods that focus on accurate fecal source identification are imperative for developing management practices to control fecal sources from relevant point and non-point sources. Some potential non-point sources of fecal pollution include livestock operations; urban runoff as a result of increased residential, commercial, and industrial development; use of manure as fertilizer; persistence of combined sewer overflows; and malfunctioning septic systems. Wildlife is often assumed to be a relevant source of pollution in cases where no obvious contribution could be assigned to human activity and livestock farming. The variety of potential fecal sources impacting a watershed makes fecal source identification a complicated process and may require numerous partnerships in order to be successful. The goal of these projects should be to improve the understanding of water quality conditions and/or improve water quality (and human health) by addressing fecal sources identified through microbial source tracking.

Request for Applications. EPA expects to provide approximately $1.5 million for 3 to 5 projects in this funding opportunity. The maximum amount of federal funds that will be awarded for any project in this funding opportunity is $500,000. Proposed project periods may be up to three years.

Project Design. In addition to the information requested for project design in the project narrative guidance, also include:

Description of the known fecal issue(s), which includes the impact of the issue, any associated data and why source tracking is relevant/necessary

- Explanation of the experimental design for Microbial Source Tracking project, which includes where sampling will occur and how frequently, and describes methods to be used for identifying the unknown fecal source
    - The EPA Source Tracking Guide may be helpful in the study design process.
    - EPA Microbial Source Tracking methods can be found here.
- Explanation of expertise (from at least one partner) in designing a microbial source tracking study
- If applicable, a description of the applicant and potential partners' capabilities (i.e., resources available to mitigate the impairment once identified) to decrease fecal contamination and potentially reduce human exposure.

Outputs and Outcomes. In addition to the information requested for environmental results in the project narrative guidance, also include:

Outputs. Potential project outputs include:

- Identification and quantification of potential fecal sources within the project watershed/s
- Number of individuals contacted as a result of education and outreach concerning sources of fecal contamination
- Development of an actionable plan that includes partners and their roles and the resources and funding that will be utilized to decrease fecal contamination and reduce potential human exposure after the sources are determined

Outcomes. One or more required:

- Number of communities where potential for human exposure will be reduced resulting in more resilient communities through the identification of fecal contamination sources, the education of the community regarding those sources, and the actions taken to address the sources
- Number of water segments or water bodies where there is improved understanding of fecal sources impacting water quality
- Number of water segments or water bodies where water quality was improved as a result of project activities

Additional outputs and outcomes accomplished as a result of project activities should also be included.

Additional Eligibility Criteria for projects under this FON. To be eligible for this funding opportunity, projects must be within the Gulf of Mexico watershed AND in the five Gulf states (AL, FL, LA, MS, TX).

E.2. Trash Free Waters – Preventing More, Picking Up Less

FON: EPA-GM-2021-TFW

Funding Opportunity Title: Healthy and Resilient Gulf 2021 - Trash Free Waters – Preventing More, Picking Up Less

Scope. This funding opportunity is intended to generate applications for innovative projects focused on utilizing partnership expertise in both governmental and nongovernmental organizations to **prevent** trash from reaching waterways. The project may include community-based trash removal components, but *removal should not be the primary focus* of the project. Projects could include:

- Fostering partnerships dedicated to establishing community-wide changes to promote prevention of trash.
- Utilizing education and incentives for organizations (e.g., businesses, schools, nonprofits) to replace unsustainable products/practices with reusable or innovative products/practices.
- Demonstrating innovative approaches to source reduction. For the purposes of this FON, source reduction is a practice that reduces, eliminates, or prevents pollution (trash or litter in the environment) at its source.

Background. Most of the trash that pollutes our rivers, lakes, estuaries, and oceans comes from sources on land. The average amount of trash generated by each person in the U.S. was 4.9 pounds per day in 2018. Trash or litter can end up in waterways and flow downstream into the ocean, where it becomes marine debris. It is estimated that 80% of the marine debris in the oceans originated from land-based sources. Plastics in the aquatic environment are of increasing concern because of their persistence and effect on the environment, wildlife, and human health. The Mississippi River drains approximately 40% of the United States and likely acts as a conduit for trash to reach the Gulf of Mexico. The most effective way to prevent marine and aquatic debris is to prevent waste in the first place through source reduction. The goal of this RFA is to reduce sources of trash pollution in the coastal zone or within 25 miles of the coastal zone where trash has a higher likelihood of getting into Gulf of Mexico waters. This

RFA also aims to reduce sources of trash pollution in certain metropolitan areas located on the Mississippi River or one of its major tributaries.

Request for Applications. EPA expects to provide approximately $4 million for 8 to 16 projects in this funding opportunity. The maximum amount of federal funds that will be awarded for any project in this funding opportunity is $500,000. Proposed project periods may be up to three years.

Project Design. In addition to the information requested for project design in the project narrative guidance:

- Include any existing background information that indicates current sources of trash that will aid in targeted prevention efforts
- Describe activities that will lead to source reduction
- Describe the method(s) used to quantify trash prevented
    - Examples of how to calculate:
        - Measure the difference between the identified baseline and monitoring after targeted prevention techniques take place
        - A modeled or calculated approach including the estimated cubic feet and/or pounds of trash prevented from entering the environment and/or waste stream
        - Number or volume of unsustainable products replaced with reusable or innovative materials
- If removal activities are included in the project, describe the method used to quantify trash removed. Applicants are encouraged but not required to use the Draft EPA Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol (ETAP) which can be found at this link: https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters/best-management-practices-tools
- Describe existing and/or anticipated partnerships with businesses, communities, cooperatives, and/or state and local governments that will help achieve sustainable measures that result in the reduction of trash in waterbodies
- Describe how the project will be sustainable after the project period ends.

Outputs and Outcomes. In addition to the information requested for environmental results in the project narrative guidance, also include:

Outputs The following are potential project outputs:

- Number of individuals reached through education and outreach activities
- Number of organizations (e.g., businesses, schools, nonprofits) engaged in trash prevention outreach activities
- Resources and/or programs developed or provided to educate consumers or organizations about their roles to reduce the amount of trash generated and to prevent trash pollution.

Outcomes
Required:

- Amount of trash prevented from entering the environment (describe quantification method)

One or more required:

- Water quality and/or understanding of water quality conditions are improved (report number of water segments or water bodies)
- Habitat is enhanced or restored (report in acres or linear feet)
- Consumer knowledge or understanding is improved as demonstrated by pre and post evaluations (report number of individuals with improved knowledge or understanding)
- Communities are made more resilient due to a change in practices or approaches resulting in the prevention of trash from reaching waterways (report number of communities)

Examples of additional project outcomes:

- Organizations that have changed business practices (report number)
- Organizations that utilize or develop more sustainable products available to consumers (report number)
- Trash removed from the environment (report in pounds, cubic feet, or both)

Additional outputs and outcomes accomplished as a result of project activities should also be included.

Additional Eligibility Criteria for projects under this FON To be eligible for this funding opportunity, projects must take place within the Gulf of Mexico watershed AND:

1. Within the coastal zone of one of the five Gulf States or
2. within 25 miles of the coastal zone of one of the five Gulf States, or
3. within the following metropolitan statistical areas (MSA):
   Baton Rouge, Louisiana
   Memphis, Tennessee-Mississippi-Arkansas
   St. Louis, Missouri-Illinois
   Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, Iowa-Illinois
   Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, Minnesota-Wisconsin
   Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, Arkansas
   Evansville, Indiana-Kentucky
   Louisville/Jefferson County, Kentucky-Indiana
   Cincinnati, Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana
   Kansas City, Missouri-Kansas
   Omaha-Council Bluffs, Nebraska-Iowa.

See Appendix C for a map of the eligible areas.

E.3 Building Community Resilience Through the Reduction and Prevention of Nonpoint Source Pollution

FON: EPA-GM-2021-NPS

Funding Opportunity Title: Healthy and Resilient Gulf 2021 – Building Community Resilience Through the Reduction and Prevention of Nonpoint Source Pollution

Scope. This funding opportunity is intended to generate applications for innovative demonstration projects that reduce nonpoint source pollution and enhance community resilience using green

infrastructure (GI) practices.

- For the purposes of this FON, GI is defined as the range of measures that use plant or soil systems; permeable pavement or other permeable surfaces or substrates; stormwater harvest and reuse; or landscaping that allows storage, infiltration, or evapotranspiration of stormwater and reduces flows to sewer systems or to surface waters.
- Resilience is the capability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant multi-hazard threats with minimum damage to social well-being, the economy, and the environment. GMD supports capacity building to assist communities in preparing for potential changes in the environment or future, disruptive events. For more information on GI for climate resiliency, visit https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/green-infrastructure-climate-resiliency.

- Potential projects should include but are not limited to green infrastructure elements found here.

Background. Green infrastructure is a cost-effective, resilient approach to managing wet weather impacts that provides many community benefits. While single-purpose gray stormwater infrastructure—conventional piped drainage and water treatment systems—is designed to move urban stormwater away from the built environment, green infrastructure reduces and treats stormwater at its source while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits. Nonpoint source pollution such as stormwater runoff can carry trash, bacteria, heavy metals, and other pollutants to tributaries and into the Gulf of Mexico. As a result, polluted runoff can degrade water quality and result in negative consequences to ecosystems and human health.

Request for Applications. EPA expects to provide approximately $2 million for 4 to 6 projects in this funding opportunity. The maximum amount of federal funds that will be awarded for any project in this funding opportunity is $500,000. Proposed project periods may be up to three years.

Project Design. In addition to the information requested for project design in the project narrative guidance, also include:

- Description of the areas where activities take place
- Explanation of 1) how the project will help reduce the effects of non-point sources and 2) how it is a demonstration project (see definition of demonstration project here)
- Description of how the GI practices will provide ancillary benefits, for example: increase of permeable surface area, ecosystem services, community services such as habitat, access to greenspace, reduction in urban heat island effect, etc.
- Description of how the GI practices will make communities (see definition of communities here) which the GI practices are located more resilient to climate change, extreme storms, sea level rise, and/or natural disasters.
- Description of how the project may help increase the adoption, use, funding, and implementation of green infrastructure
- Description of implementing partners and their roles for the project
- Description of how the project will result in stormwater volume reduction and/or increased groundwater infiltration, and projected nutrient reduction benefits

    - Estimations may be made through direct monitoring or through a modeled approach.
    - If utilizing models, please provide a description of the modeling approach, modeling results, and the model used. For more information, refer to: https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/green-infrastructure-modeling-tools or https://www.epa.gov/water-research/green-infrastructure-modeling-toolkit
- Where applicable, provide a brief description of how soil hydrology and the soil's capacity to infiltrate stormwater runoff will be assessed. For more information, refer to: https://acsess.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2136/sssaj2014.05.0200 https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0169204614000279?via%3Dihub
- Description of how the project will be sustainable after the project period ends

Outputs and Outcomes. In addition to the information requested for environmental results in the project narrative guidance, also include:

Outputs. The following are potential project outputs:

- Estimated reduction in nutrients and other pollutants via monitoring or modeling
- Number of habitat acres enhanced, protected or restored
- Number of communities that enhanced their knowledge or identify risk management actions related to climate and stormwater vulnerabilities
- Estimated volume of stormwater runoff captured and/or increased infiltration (if applicable)
- Education events/presentations (report number of events and participants)

Outcomes. One or more required:

- Acres of habitat enhanced, protected or restored over the life of the project with quarterly milestones clearly reflected. An initial baseline must be included to provide an accurate view of progress
- Improvement in at least one water quality parameter in a water body and/or segment over the life of the project with quarterly milestones clearly reflected. Applicant should evaluate the baseline conditions as a part of their project to provide an accurate view of progress.
    - Examples of water quality parameters that could be demonstrated in a water quality improvement project include but are not limited to: excess nutrients, turbidity (and/or total suspended solids), dissolved oxygen, pH, and temperature.
- Change in willingness to adopt, fund, and implement green infrastructure practices as a result of project outreach resulting in more resilient stormwater management and communities. The applicant should include a description of their method for evaluating the change in willingness to adopt green infrastructure practices in their application. For example, number of projects that overcome barriers (including a description of the barriers) to green infrastructure adoption as a result of project outreach and number of communities that benefit from more resilient stormwater management.

Additional outputs and outcomes accomplished as a result of project activities should also be included.

Additional Eligibility Criteria for projects under this FON. To be eligible for this funding opportunity,

projects must take place in the Gulf of Mexico watershed AND in the five Gulf states (AL, FL, LA, MS, TX).

E.4 STEM Career Development for High School Aged Youth

FON: EPA-GM-2021-HSCD

Funding Opportunity Title: Healthy and Resilient Gulf 2021 – STEM Career Development for High School Aged Youth

Scope. This funding opportunity is intended to generate applications for innovative projects focused on advancing Gulf environmental related work readiness skills in high school aged youth. These work-readiness projects may center around marine aquaculture or green infrastructure practices that improve water quality, restore habitat, enhance community resilience, and provide environmental education and outreach. Projects must include one of the following activities:

- Education and training programs on growing native species for habitat restoration; or rearing, breeding, and harvesting of fish, shellfish, or other species of the Gulf of Mexico (e.g., oyster farming, aquaculture, aquaponics)
- Education and training programs that develop skills in design, installation, and/or operation and maintenance of green infrastructure (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens, or living shorelines and the nexus to water quality, flood reduction, habitat creation, and/or community resilience)

Applicants are also encouraged to consider developing a student exchange learning program that connects schools in the Gulf of Mexico watersheds (upstream and downstream) through education and training programs described above (virtual student exchange program will also be acceptable).

Background. STEM career or workforce development programs build environmental stewardship by engaging high school students to develop the skills needed to secure full-time, sustainable employment as it relates to improving water quality; protecting, enhancing or restoring habitat; and/or gulf-resilient promoting smart growth practices. These green jobs reduce environmental contamination, build more resilient and sustainable communities, and increase environmental education thereby creating a healthier environment. Projects are encouraged to target Title I schools or informal education centers (e.g. Job Corp) that service students from communities impacted by environmental injustices within the five Gulf States.

Request for Applications. EPA expects to provide approximately $1.5 million and anticipates awarding a total of five projects, one project in each of the Gulf States (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas). The maximum amount of federal funds that will be awarded for any project in this funding opportunity is $300,000. Proposed project periods may be up to three years.

Project Design. In addition to the information requested for project design in the project narrative guidance, also include:

- Description of applicant's ability to develop and execute marine aquaculture or green infrastructure work readiness programs through the one of the following activities:
    - Education and training programs on growing native species for habitat restoration; or rearing, breeding, and harvesting of fish, shellfish, or other species native to the Gulf of Mexico (e.g., oyster farming, aquaculture, aquaponics)
    - Education and training programs that develop skills in design, installation, and/or operation and maintenance of green infrastructure (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens, or

living shorelines and the nexus to water quality, flood reduction, habitat creation, and/or community resilience)

- Explanation of how program targets Title I schools or informal education centers (e.g. Job Corp) that service students from communities impacted by environmental injustices. Applicant must communicate prior engagement and project success in underserved and underrepresented communities with letters of support
- Description of how work readiness programs plan to educate students through new or existing programs
- Development of a baseline to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities and address measures taken to evaluate competencies for improvements, thereby providing evidence of environmental education levels improved

Outputs and Outcomes. In addition to the information requested for environmental results in the project narrative guidance, also include:

Outputs.

Required:

- Estimated number of expected audience(s) and/or individuals reached through the work readiness program
- Lesson plans, educational modules, etc. created

Examples of Additional Project outputs:

- Estimated number of habitat acres restored/enhanced.
- Estimated number of water segments improved.
- Estimated number of communities engaged.

Outcomes.
Required:

- Number of students whose career or academic path is shaped by the project (this estimate should only consider the project period identified)

Additional outputs and outcomes accomplished as a result of project activities should also be included.

Additional Eligibility Criteria for projects under this FON. To be eligible for this funding opportunity, projects must take place in the Gulf of Mexico watershed AND in one of the five Gulf states (AL, FL, LA, MS, TX)

F. RFA TERMS The following are defined for the purposes for this request for applications only:

Community: The term "**community(ies)**" means any group of people working on or planning for strengthening community resilience. This can include municipalities, cities, towns, states, specific Gulf of Mexico watershed waters, regional planning commissions, and other groups. *Community should be defined within the project by the applicant.*

Demonstration Project: The term "**demonstration project**" means a project that must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be

disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. The applicant must clearly explain in the proposal how the technologies, methods, or approaches used are new or experimental and how the project otherwise meets the requirements of a demonstration as described in this RFA. If your project uses technologies, methods or approaches that have been used previously in other geographic areas and/or other situations, then your proposal must include an explanation as to how your demonstration project is different from such prior projects. The applicant must also explain what will be learned from the demonstration project.

Environmental Justice: The term "**Environmental Justice**" is defined as 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.

Green Infrastructure: The term "**Green Infrastructure**" means the range of measures that use plant or soil systems; permeable pavement or other permeable surfaces or substrates; stormwater harvest and reuse; or landscaping that allows storage, infiltration, or evapotranspiration of stormwater and reduces flows to sewer systems or to surface waters.

Metropolitan Statistical Area: The term "**Metropolitan Statistical Area**" is defined as a Core Based Statistical Area associated with at least one urbanized area that has a population of at least 50,000. The Metropolitan Statistical Area comprises the central county or counties containing the core, plus adjacent outlying counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the central county or counties as measured through commuting.

Microbial Source Tracking: The term **"Microbial Source Tracking"** is defined as an approach used to identify and track sources of fecal contamination impacting water quality in stream, river, lakes, and marine (including beaches) ecosystems.

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

Outcome: The term "**outcome**" means the result, effect or consequence that will be achieved by carrying out an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, must be quantitative, and may not necessarily be achievable within a grant funding period.

G. Additional Information

Multiple Applications. Applicants may submit applications under each FON listed above and may submit multiple applications under the same FON as long as each application is for a different project. In addition, each individual project for which an applicant seeks funding must be covered by a separate application under the appropriate FON. An application cannot address more than one funding opportunity.

Subawardees and/or Contractors. If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s), including individual consultants, in your application as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the "Contracts and Subawards" provisions at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses .

II. AWARD INFORMATION Amounts, Targets, and Number of Projects

A. Award Amounts Approximately $9 million in EPA funding is expected to be awarded under this RFA for approximately 30 projects in the four FONs described in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4. The number of projects EPA will fund as a result of this RFA will be based on the quality of applications received, the availability of funding, and other applicable considerations. These amounts are estimates only (except as noted below) and are being provided solely for application preparation purposes. **Please note, however, that the specified maximum amount in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4 that will be awarded for an individual project in any funding opportunity establishes a per-project limit for the EPA funding; applications seeking EPA funding in excess of that amount will be rejected.** In addition, an application for a multi-phase project will be treated as a request for the full amount for all phases. If that combined amount exceeds the specified maximum, the application will be rejected.

The actual award amounts and number of projects awarded under each of the funding opportunities in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4 may differ from what is estimated for many reasons, including the number of meritorious applications received and funding availability. In addition, EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and amount of awards under each funding opportunity, or change the ratio of assistance agreements it awards among the funding opportunities. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under any or all of the funding opportunities identified in this RFA or make fewer awards than anticipated.

B. Anticipated Project Start and End Dates This Request for Applications instructs applicants to submit certifications and other documentation required for a full and complete funding package so that their projects could, if selected, proceed expeditiously. The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will begin in Calendar Year 2022. Proposed project periods may be up to three years.

C. Funding Type Successful applicants will be issued a grant or cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. 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 close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR §200.317 and 2 CFR §200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. 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.

D. Additional Funding Information

Additional Awards: EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

Award Funding: Awards may be fully or incrementally funded, as appropriate, based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

Future Funding: Selection or award of funding under this RFA is not a guarantee of future funding.

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.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Entities: In accordance with Assistance Listing 66.475, applications will be accepted from governmental entities, including state agencies, interstate agencies, Indian tribes, local governments, institutions of higher learning (i.e., colleges and universities), and non-profit organizations (as defined at 2 CFR 200) are eligible to apply for funding under this RFA. School districts or high schools designated as one of the eligible entities above are eligible.

For-profit organizations are not an eligible entity for this funding opportunity. Additionally, non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

B. Coalitions: Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subawardee(s) of the recipient. Subawards and subgrants must be consistent with the definitions of those term**s** in 2 C.F.R. § 200.92. The recipient must administer the grant, will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 C.F.R. § 200.331(d), subrecipients or subgrantees are accountable to the recipient or grantee for proper use of EPA funding.

Coalitions may not include for-profit organizations that will provide services or products to the successful applicant. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards. For-profit organizations are eligible to receive contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 C.F.R. § 200.319, as applicable. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. (Please see 2 C.F.R. § 1500.9, formerly at 40 C.F.R. § 30.27(b) or 31.36(j), as applicable.) For additional information, please review the following Federal Register: http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-7867.pdf .

C. Eligible Activities: Projects submitted must fit under the following funding statute Clean Water Act, §104(b)(3), which authorizes the award of grants to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution.

Demonstration projects must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. The applicant must clearly explain in the proposal how the technologies, methods, or approaches used are new or experimental and how the project otherwise meets the requirements of a demonstration as described in this RFA. If your project uses technologies, methods or approaches that have been used previously in other geographic areas and/or other situations, then your proposal must include an explanation as to how your demonstration project is different from such prior projects. The applicant must also explain what will be learned from the demonstration project.

D. Ineligible Activities: *If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible 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.* The following are ineligible activities:

- Projects that do not comply with Clean Water Act Section 104(b)(3), which authorizes the award of assistance agreements to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution.
- Actions required to settle a formal enforcement action or included in a court order; or specified as a required mitigation measure under a state, local, or federal permit for a specific project; however, grant funding may be used to enhance or expand such projects beyond minimum requirements for compliance.
- Work involving only routine maintenance of storm water infrastructure and other facilities
- Projects which fall under the existing planning responsibilities of an individual state or local government (e.g., development of TMDLs or MS4 permits)
- Solely "gray infrastructure" projects (e.g., installation of sewer lines)
- Construction activities that are not a part of a demonstration project. This includes, but is not limited to, preliminary planning to determine the economic and engineering feasibility of a facility; the engineering, architectural, legal, fiscal, and economic investigations and studies; surveys, designs, plans, working drawings, specifications, procedures, and other actions necessary to the construction of a facility; the erection, acquisition, alteration, remodeling, improvement, or extension of a facility; and the inspection and supervision of the construction of a facility.

E. Match or Cost-Share: There is no cost-sharing or matching requirement as a condition of eligibility under this RFA.

F. Threshold Eligibility Criteria: These are requirements that if not met by the applicant by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications from eligible entities listed in Section III.A that meet these criteria by the time of application submission will be evaluated against the ranking factors in *Sec.* V.A. of this RFA *(*this includes the Additional Eligibility Criteria for each FON listed in Sections I.E.1 through I.E.4). Applicants deemed

ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified by e-mail within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Substantial Compliance: Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Sec. IV.C of this announcement or else they will be rejected. ***Where a page limit is stated for the Narrative Proposal in Sec. IV.C, pages in excess of the limitation will not be reviewed.***
2. Grant.gov submission: In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Sec. IV.A of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Sec. IV.A) on or before the application submission deadline published in Sec. IV.B of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Appendix A of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.
3. Application Deadline: Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. **An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission.** Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Rachel Houge (GMP-RFP@epa.gov) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.
4. Single Funding Opportunity: Each application must address one, and only one, funding opportunity as described in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4.
5. Project Location: Applications must meet specific location criteria that apply to the respective funding opportunity. Please refer to funding opportunities in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4.
6. Funding Request Limit: Applications seeking funding in excess of the specified maximum amount of EPA funding that may be requested for an individual project under any funding opportunity number will be rejected. Maximum funding amounts are specified in the funding opportunity descriptions in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4. In addition, an application for a multi-phase project will be treated as a request for the full amount for all phases. If that combined amount exceeds the specified maximum, the application will be rejected.
7. Eligible activities: An application must identify how its activities meet the funding authority described in Sec. III.C. In addition, if an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities (see above definitions of applicant eligibility, eligible activities, and ineligible activities), the application will NOT be considered.
8. The application will NOT be considered unless it includes each of the following:
   - Estimated Quantitative Environmental Results
   - Partnerships/Collaboration with applicable Letters of Support
   - Budget Table

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures: Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability

to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGD Waivers in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) at OGDWaivers@epa.gov or using an address listed below at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

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

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

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

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

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request--all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding proposal content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31st of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2021, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2021). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31st of that calendar

year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2021 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2022, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2022.

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

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

Your organization's authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through grants.gov no later than August 6, 2021 11:59 PM Eastern time.

Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a unique entity identifier (e.g., DUNS number) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on Grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE. Please see RAIN-2021-G01 for information about EPA's implementation of the upcoming Government-wide transition from DUNS to Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

C. Content of Application Submission

The application package must include all of the following materials:

1. Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance: Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the fax number and email address in Blocks 8f and 21 of the Standard Form SF 424. The contact person you provide in Block 8.f. should be different than the Authorized Representative listed in Block 21. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

2. **SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs:** Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package. (See instructions for document 10 below.)

3. EPA Form 5700-54, EPA Key Contacts Form: Complete the form. A minimum of two contacts should be identified. Please be sure the contacts on this form are consistent with the other forms. If

additional pages are needed, attach these additional pages to the electronic application package by using the "Other Attachments Form" in the "Optional Documents" box. (See Application Preparation and Submission Instructions below for more details.)

4. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report: Complete the form.

5. Project Narrative: Includes **the Summary Information Page; Workplan; Detailed Budget Narrative; and Maps, Charts and Figures.** Prepare as described in the project narrative section of the announcement. This is the only file that should be submitted using the Project Narrative Attachment form.

6. Other Attachments Form – Budget Table. A fill-able template for the budget table is available for download with the RFA on www.grants.gov and by following the Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico 2021 RFA Announcement link at https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico. Prepare as described in the budget table section of the announcement. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the budget table template. This file should be submitted using the "Other Attachments Form" form in Grants.gov.

7. Other Attachments Form - Resumes or curriculum vitae of Principal Investigators and critical staff. Use the "Other Attachments Form" to attach a copy of the resume or curriculum vitae of principal investigators and critical staff for the proposed project. Such documentation should outline the education, work history, and knowledge/expertise of the individual that relate to managing the proposed project. ***Please consolidate all resumes into one file and include the word "resume" in the filename.***

8. Other Attachments Form – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. Use if indirect costs are included in the project budget. Use the "Other Attachments Form" to attach a copy of your organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable. (See Application Preparation and Submission Instructions below for more details.) You must submit a copy of your organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed budget includes indirect costs. ***Please include the words "cost agreement" in the filename.***

9. Other Attachments Form – Support Letters. Use the "Other Attachments Form" to attach any relevant letters from collaborators, partners or communities in support of the project. Specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project or what that organization supports, as applicable. ***Please consolidate all letters into one file and include the word "Letters of support" or "LOS" in the file name.***

Documents 1 through 5 listed under Application Materials above should appear in the "Mandatory Documents" box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For documents 1 through 4, click on the appropriate form and then click "Open Form" below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click "Save." When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, "Move Form to Submission List." This action will move the document over to the

box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For document 5, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your narrative proposal as described above and in Sec. 6.4 and save the documents to your computer as a PDF file. When you are ready to attach your proposal to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach your proposal (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click “Add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Other Attachments: Documents 6 through 9 are submitted using the Other Attachments form. You must submit document 6 – Budget Table and document 7 - Resumes or curriculum vitae of Principal Investigators and critical staff. You are required to submit document 8 – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement – if you have included any indirect costs in your proposed budget. You are required to submit document 9 – Support Letters – to demonstrate evidence of collaboration and support. To attach documents 6 -9, use the “Other Attachments Form”. After attaching the documents, please remember to highlight the “Other Attachments Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List” Please submit each document from 6 through 9 as a separate file.

Project Narrative

Project Narrative (including the **Summary Information Page; Workplan; Detailed Budget Narrative; and Maps, Charts and Figures**) must be no more than **twelve** single-spaced pages in length and include the items below in the requested order**. Excess pages will not be reviewed.** Maps, charts, pictures, and other figures must be included in the Project Narrative but will not be counted against the **twelve**-page limit for the Project Narrative. **Maps, charts, pictures, and other figures that are submitted as a separate attachment will not be reviewed.**

Each Project Narrative must be formatted for 8½” x 11” paper and should use no smaller than an 11-point Calibri font with 1” margins. Do not use a “double column” (aka newspaper) format. Readability is of paramount importance. Do not include more than one application in any file. Please do not zip the file or use a zip extension for your file because it will not be accepted.

Do not include confidential business information in your application.

Project Narrative Format:

Project Narrative (12-page limit including the summary information page)
1. SUMMARY INFORMATION PAGE (SHOULD NOT EXCEED ONE PAGE) • **Funding Opportunity and FON**. Identify the funding opportunity from Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4 to which the application relates by choosing one from among: • Improving Community Health through Microbial Source Tracking (EPA-GM-2021-MST)

- Trash Free Waters – Preventing More, Picking Up Less (EPA-GM-2021-TFW)
- Building Community Resilience Through the Reduction and Prevention of Nonpoint Source Pollution (EPA-GM-2021-NPS)
- STEM Career Development for High School Aged Youth (EPA-GM-2021-HSCD)

Identify only one funding opportunity per application submission.

- **Project Title**. Please limit to 60 characters. EPA reserves the right to change the project title for its administrative convenience.
- **Applicant Information**. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, e-mail address and DUNS number. *Do not include private information.*
- **Type of Organization.** Specify, consistent with your SF 424, one of the following:
  - Local Government (includes County, Municipal, Inter-municipal organizations, Township, Special Purpose District and other entities defined as local governments at 2 C.F.R. § 200.64)
  - State Agency (includes Interstate)
  - Indian Tribe
  - College and University (includes private and state institutions)
  - Not for Profit/Non-profit
  - Other
- **Proposed Funding Request**. The total dollar amount requested from EPA- make sure it is within the limits specified for the applicable funding opportunity/FON in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4, or your application will be rejected.
- **Project Duration**. Provide beginning and ending dates. See "Anticipated Start and End Dates" in Sec. II.B.
- **Brief Project Description**. Summarize the proposed project in 100 words or less in a clear and succinct manner in PLAIN LANGUAGE, including expected outputs, outcomes and environmental benefits resulting from implementation of the project. Include environmental KEY TERMS that could be used as search terms (e.g., water quality, toxins, mercury, etc.). Do not use acronyms. Should the application be selected and a grant awarded, this description may be posted to the EPA Web. EPA reserves the right to make unilateral changes to conform to posting requirements.
- **Place of Performance**. Project Location. Specify a single, representative project location within the Gulf of Mexico Watershed, including 8- or 12-digit HUC code (available from http://water.usgs.gov/wsc/reg/04.html). Please identify a single, representative location within the Gulf of Mexico watershed even if the work will be done at multiple locations or by applicants who are located outside the watershed. Please include the reason for the location you identify if that is not self-evident.
  - In addition to the single best representative location, for projects with multiple locations, specify up to five cities, counties, states, zip codes, and congressional districts where work will be performed. If your project includes more than five locations, select the five that best represent the project.
- **Project period**. Provide anticipated project start date and anticipated project completion date.

2. PROJECT WORKPLAN (11-PAGE LIMIT)

The work plan for each proposed project must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Secs. I to IV. for the applicable funding opportunity and the threshold

eligibility criteria in Sec. III.F and must address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Sec. V.A. ***Each work plan should be organized in the order and with the headings and information requested below or you risk the possibility of information being left out by you as the applicant, or overlooked, or not fully comprehended by the reviewers when the project is scored.***

Project Design:

Describe with specificity the nature of the proposed project including:

- **Why:** Describe why you are proposing this project, why you have chosen these goals, and the need for this project. This should include a description of how the project is relevant to the local community(ies).
- **What will be done**: Describe the goal of the project and outline the steps to be taken and the significant milestones to be achieved to accomplish the goal.
    - If the proposed activities are part of any applicable federal, state or local place-based efforts (e.g., CCMP, state resource plans, Gulf-related STEM curriculum, and watershed management plans) describe the purpose and effect of the project in such a plan. Provide an active Internet link (URL) for that plan or, if a URL is not available, describe where it can be found.
    - If your project is a demonstration project: Describe how your project is novel or innovative and cite technical or conceptual foundation for this approach – for example, studies, pilot projects, successful projects elsewhere, etc., where appropriate, that verify the need for your project. (Citations should be included in the Narrative Proposal but will not be counted in the page limit.)
    - Describe how will project activities or dissemination of project results will continue after the funding period.
- **Where**: Explain where the project will take place. Include a map at the end of the narrative that delineates the project boundaries and/or shows the expected location(s) of project(s)
- **Who:** Explain who in **your** organization will manage and implement your project. A discussion of partners and their roles is required in the collaboration and partnership section.
- **Additional Project Design Details: Include additional information specific to the funding opportunity for which you are applying as described** in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4.
- **EPA Strategic Plan and Gulf of Mexico Relevance:** Explain how your project is relevant to the Gulf of Mexico AND how the results will support: FY 2018-22 EPA Strategic Plan Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water

Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes. The following items should be included in this section:

- Specify the estimated quantitative and qualitative expected results (outputs and outcomes) of the proposed project **including but not limited to those specifically identified in** Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4 **for the applicable funding opportunity** and any other measurable outputs and outcomes. **Points will be deducted if no quantitative targets are identified.**

- Describe how the estimated quantitative results were determined and your plan and approach for measuring and tracking progress towards achieving the expected and proposed project outputs and outcomes.
- Provide a timetable or schedule with target dates projected for major activities, accomplishments and deliverables, including development of quality assurance documents (if applicable) and the submittal of quarterly and final reports. The link between the activities and achievement of identified outputs and outcomes should be clear.
- **Include any additional information required for the specific funding opportunity you are applying for as described in** Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4**.**

For awards under this competition that are expected to exceed $200,000 in federal funding AND involve the generation or use of environmental data, please provide a statement acknowledging 1) your need to demonstrate competency prior to beginning work and 2) your understanding that a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and/or a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) may be required. Please see Sec. VI.O. at the following link for more information: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses#competency. For further information, please see the Frequently Asked Questions Document regarding this EPA requirement: https://www.epa.gov/measurements/documents-about-measurement-competency-under-assistance-agreements.

Collaboration and Plans. The following items should be included in this section:

- List the key partners who will help implement this project, if applicable, and describe their role in the project's staffing, funding, design, and activities. A key partner is a partner on whom the success of the project depends. Letters of support that state the organizations commitments to the roles identified are required.
- List other proposed groups that will be meaningfully engaged, allowing partner and stakeholder perspectives to be more fully integrated throughout the project, to ensure broad utility of the work and enhance likelihood of success. Applicants should provide letters of support and commitment from partners and stakeholders key to the successful completion of the project.
- Describe how you will coordinate activities of the project with related or complementary activities, projects, and studies and how it will result in a greater positive environmental impact, if applicable.

Community Support and Communication of Results. The following items should be included in this section:

- Describe support you have from the community(ies) in which your project takes place. This should include letters of support or other evidence of how you've come to that conclusion.
- Describe how project results (e.g., presentations, data and reports) will be disseminated to interested stakeholders (e.g., community, local, state and tribal environmental managers, academia and/or other interested stakeholders) in a timely manner and the potential of the project for transferability and applicability to other places.

Environmental Justice. The following items should be included in this section:

- Describe how your 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 people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions. This could include:
    - how the project benefits these communities and/or populations;
    - how the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project;
    - how the project will benefit such communities and/or populations that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above.
- Environmental Justice Web-based Screening Tool - Applicants are encouraged, as appropriate, to include data from EPA's EJSCREEN tool (or other EJ-focused geospatial mapping tools) as part of their application to help characterize and describe the affected communities/populations and area(s). Data from other sources (e.g. studies, census, and third-party reports) should also be included to give a more complete picture of the impacted communities and populations. Instructions, resources, and tutorials on how to use EJSCREEN are included at the hyperlink above.

NOTE: 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 or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal and indigenous populations and vulnerable populations including those identified above. 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.

Applicant Capability and Past Performance. The following items should be included in this section:

- Provide a list of up to three federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size,

scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than three agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). 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 this subfactor (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). ***If you do not provide any response for this item, you will receive a score of 0 for this factor.***

- Describe whether and how you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
- Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including: 1) whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements; and if not, provide an explanation; and 2) whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.
- Describe organizational experience and staffs' expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources that will ensure successful achievement of the project results; or describe how you will obtain these qualifications; provide supporting documentation (i.e., resumes or curricula vitae for key staff, as defined in Sec. 6.0. Application & Submission Information).
- Describe financial controls in place to ensure that awarded funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner.

Budget Narrative. The following items should be included in this section:

- Narrative description of costs not easily understandable in the budget table or that require additional information. Common examples where this is necessary are: 1) description of the roles and responsibilities of personnel, 2) description of what supplies will be used for, 3) description of why the purchase of equipment is preferable to rental of equipment 4) providing contract details such as whether it will be sole source or competed and why that choice was made; and 5) description of activities of a Subawardee, etc.

Budget Table *(please see Appendix B for Interim EPA Budget guidance)*

A budget table must be provided that identifies major costs associated with the application in an easily understandable format. Where possible, the budget table should link expenses to tasks and deliverables from the project description. Budget resources necessary for completing a QAPP, if applicable, sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress, should be included. ***Utilizing the suggested budget table template is strongly encouraged or you risk the possibility of information being left out by you as the applicant, or overlooked, or not fully comprehended by the reviewers when the project is scored.***

The fill-able template is available for download with the RFA on https://www.grants.gov and by following the Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico 2021 RFA announcement link at https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico.

*Reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application is cost-effective and reasonable, considering the following factors: indirect costs and costs versus anticipated results of services.

Other Attachments: The additional attachments (Other Attachment Forms 6-9) listed in Sec. IV.C are not part of the Narrative Proposal and are not included in the 12-page limit.

Notification: All applicants will be contacted following selections to tell them whether or not they have been selected.

Information provided to EPA: Before applying for an award, applicants should be aware that under Public Law No. 105-277, data produced under an award, and any information provided to EPA, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Communications: See: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses for general provisions regarding communications with applicants. EPA will post a pre-recorded informational presentation to provide additional guidance in developing your application. The presentation can be found by following the Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico RFA 2021 link here: https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico. Any questions you have after watching the presentations should be submitted to gmp-rfa@epa.gov. EPA will respond to questions received through July 30, 2021, but cannot guarantee that it will respond to questions received thereafter.

D. Submission Date and Times: The closing date and time for submission of applications is August 6, 2021, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET). Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

E. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into RFA: Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses (https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Application Review: Applications meeting the threshold eligibility criteria in Sec. III.F will be evaluated based on the criteria set forth below. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal and should follow the Project Narrative Format here.** If not, you risk the possibility of information being left out by you as the applicant or overlooked or not fully comprehended by the reviewers when the project is scored. Each application will be rated under a points system, with a total of 110 points possible.

Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they address the criteria; the failure to provide applicable information in the application may affect the score assigned for a criterion.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	**Points**
Total Possible Points	**110**
1. Project Design: a) (27 pts): Applicants will be evaluated based on their strategic and technical approaches for performing the project including the soundness and logic of these approaches. Applicants for all funding opportunities may score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal the following element: • Description of project sustainability after the project ends. This could include: Project plans and designs that are resilient to the effects of environmental stressors, including climate change, and other variables; Commitment beyond demonstration phase of project; Resource for and/or commitment to project after the project period ends; Applicants should refer to the following for information to include in the "Project Design": • Project Narrative Format **AND** • For funding opportunity-specific criteria: Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4 for the FON to which they wish to apply. b) (3 pts): Describes the project's relevance to the Gulf of Mexico AND how the results will support: FY 2018-22 EPA Strategic Plan Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment, Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water	**30**
2. Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures: Applicants will be evaluated based on the completeness and strength of their outputs and outcomes, and their approach for demonstrating how they will achieve the expected and proposed project outputs and outcomes, including but not limited to those identified in Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4 for the applicable funding opportunity. This will include evaluating whether they described specific outputs (activity, effort, and/or associated work products) and outcomes (environmental result, effect or consequence), **including target numbers**, with an identified project timetable or schedule. Applicants will also be evaluated based on their plan and approach for measuring and tracking their progress towards achieving the expected and proposed project outputs and outcomes and a table that links the tasks with deliverables and accomplishments. Applicants should refer to the following for information to include in "Environmental Results": • Project Narrative Format AND • For funding opportunity-specific criteria: Secs. I.E.1-I.E.4 for the FON to which they wish to apply.	**20**

3. Collaboration and Plans: Applicants will be evaluated based on a) the extent and quality to which they demonstrate that they will work with appropriate partners to effectively and efficiently complete the proposed project and b) the extent to which the project is coordinated with and/or complements other projects or activities being performed (by the applicant or others) that will result in greater positive environmental impact. Letters of support are required for all key project partners. Applicants should refer here for information to include in Collaboration and Plans.	**15**
4. Community Support and Communication of Results: Applicants will be evaluated based on (a) the extent and quality to which the applicant has demonstrated community support and (b) the quality of the applicant's plans to disseminate project results to interested stakeholders in a timely manner and the potential of the project for transferability and applicability to other places. Applicants should refer to here for information to include in Community Support and Communication of Results.	**10**
5. Environmental Justice: Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will effectively 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 people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions. As part of this evaluation, applications will be evaluated, as appropriate, on: how the project benefits these communities and/or populations; the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project; and how the project will benefit such communities and/or populations that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above. Applicants should refer here for information to include in the Environmental Justice section.	**10**
6. Applicant Capability and Past Performance: The applicant will be evaluated on the following sections. **a) Past Performance (3 pts):** Describes the applicant's history of successfully a) completing and managing assistance agreements and b) meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. If such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not. Note: This section of the application should list up to three federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (preferably EPA agreements).	**10**

In evaluating applicants under the criteria above, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files, the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information Systems and/or prior/current grantors (to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a half score (1.5) for these subfactors. If you do not provide any response for these items, you will receive a score of 0 for these factors. **b) Organizational Capability (4 pts):** Describes their organizational experience and staff expertise to assess the ability of applicant to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. Supporting documentation (e.g., resumes, curricula vitae for key staff) should be included as part of your application package and can be referred to in this section. **c) Financial Controls (3 pts):** Describes the financial controls currently in place to ensure that awarded funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner. Applicants should refer here for information to include in Applicant Capability and Past Performance.	
7. Budget: Applications will be evaluated based on the reasonableness, necessity and allowability (of costs) of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and for the expected benefits to be achieved. This section will be evaluated based on two items: 1) budget table and 2) budget narrative (located within the project workplan). The budget table should be easy to understand and link the expenses to the tasks and deliverables from the project workplan. The budget narrative should be used to provide a description of costs not easily understandable in the budget table. Utilizing the suggested budget table template is strongly encouraged or you risk the possibility of information being left out by you as the applicant, or overlooked, or not fully comprehended by the reviewers when the project is scored. Applicants should refer here for information to include in Budget.	**15**

B. Review and Selection Process:

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in III.F. Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be considered using the evaluation criteria listed above. Eligible applications will be evaluated based on the criteria above by review panels composed of federal agency staff. There will be separate review panels for evaluating eligible applications submitted under each funding opportunity described in Secs. E.1– E.4 . Review panels will rank the applications based on the criteria above and develop preliminary funding recommendations for presentation to the selection official(s). Each funding opportunity/FON will have its own ranking list and funding recommendations. Information pertaining to proposed recommendations may be shared with appropriate governmental departments or agencies before selections are made in order to determine whether potential selections (a) are expected to be funded by another funding source or (b) could be affected by permitting or regulatory issues.

C. Other Factors

Final funding decisions for each funding opportunity will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official will consider the review panel rankings and recommendations and may also consider the following factors: any duplicate funding issues; the amount of the organization's unliquidated obligations on previous GMD grants; program priorities; funding availability; appropriate balances of geographic and jurisdictional distribution of projects; and organizational diversity in terms of applicant type selected to receive awards (e.g., local government, state agency, Indian Tribe**,** college and university, other not for profit entity) in order to help ensure a broad representation of entity types receiving awards to promote program effectiveness.

Any final selections made out of rank order must be documented and justified based on the factors listed above. Once selections have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA approving and awarding official.

D. Additional Provisions for Applications Incorporated by Reference:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found on the EPA Solicitation Clauses (https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa- solicitation-clauses) page. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices and Status: Following evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status, as follows:

1. EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicants will be made via email to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application.

2. EPA anticipates that notification to successful applicants will be made via email to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application within 60 days after the closing date of this RFA. The notification will advise them that their proposed project has been evaluated and forwarded to the EPA approving official for further consideration and possible award. This notification, which advises finalists that their proposed project has been forwarded to the approving official, **is not and should not be considered as** an authorization to begin work. Applicants are cautioned that only the EPA award official is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice signed by the EPA award official is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. The applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms, which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification to finalists and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement: The successful applicants will be required to

adhere to federal grants requirements, particularly those found in applicable Cost Principles (2 C.F.R. § 200 Subpart E), Administrative Requirements (2 C.F.R. § 200 and 1500), and Audit Requirements (A-133). This includes government-wide requirements pertaining to accounting standards, lobbying, minority or woman business enterprise, publication, meetings, construction, and disposition of property. Additional EPA regulations are codified in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/policy-regulations-and-guidance-epa-grants.

C. Reporting Requirements: Applicants selected for funding shall provide narrative technical progress reports addressing financial and work progress. Special conditions requiring quarterly progress reporting and a detailed final technical report, will be added to awards. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

D. Disputes: Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII. of the announcement. Note, the Federal Register notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

E. Additional Programmatic Items of Note:

- **Quality System Documentation:** Quality system documentation (e.g., quality assurance project plans, quality management plans) is required for grants involving the use or collection of environmental data. EPA must have this documentation at least 45 days prior to the initiating of data collection or data compilation. Applicants should budget time and resources for developing quality system documentation. Applicants that do not do so may have to fund the quality system documentation and any necessary project changes out of their own funds.
- **Issuance of Awards:** EPA reserves the right to negotiate appropriate changes in project terms and amounts (*i.e.*, changes that do not affect the integrity of the competition or materially change the application) consistent with EPA Order 5700.5A1 and other applicable policies, before making final decisions and awards. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards. Applicants may be asked to include greater detail and specificity for their work plans before final awards are issued. Applicants may also be requested to satisfy data quality or peer review requirements before or shortly after the awarding of grants.
- **Other Programmatic Requirements:** Additional applicable programmatic terms and conditions will be included in grant agreements, including provisions for: signage for on-the ground projects, and EPA pre-approval of subcontracting and of conference participation. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

F. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into RFA: Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses (https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for

this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Gulf of Mexico Division
ATTN: Rachel Houge
2510 14th Street – Suite 1212
Gulfport, MS 39501
GMP-RFP@epa.gov

Please send all questions to gmp-rfp@epa.gov. Questions and answers will be posted at the Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico 2021 link on the GMD home page https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico and will be updated weekly as new questions are received. Note: Prior to submitting a new question, please check the Q&A to ensure your question is not already answered there.

Appendix A. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions

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

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

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

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to Grants.gov and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the FON[1], or the Assistance Listing number that applies to the announcement (Assistance Listing 66.475), in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

> *NOTE*: All applications must now be submitted through Grants.gov using the "Workspace" feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application

[1] Use the FON for the category for which you wish to apply:

- Improving Community Health through Microbial Source Tracking (EPA-GM-2021-MST)
- Trash Free Waters – Preventing More, Picking Up Less (EPA-GM-2021-TFW)
- Building Community Resilience Through the Reduction and Prevention of Nonpoint Source Pollution (EPA-GM-2021-NPS)
- STEM Career Development for High School Aged Youth (EPA-GM-2021-HSCD)

electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than 10:59 p.m. Central Time / 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on August 6, 2021. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

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

Application Materials: The following forms and documents are required under this announcement, as described in Section IV. C of the RFA. For instructional links on how to complete documents and budget development, please see Appendix B. All documents, except the budget table, must be submitted as PDF files.

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) Project Narrative-See **here** for content-Project Narrative Attachment Form,
6) Other Attachments Form – Budget Table
7) Other Attachments Form - Resumes or *curriculum vitae* of Principal Investigators and Critical Staff,
8) Other Attachments Form - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, and
9) Other Attachments Form - Letters of support**.**

Saving and Submitting: Please note that applicants are limited to using the following characters in all attachment file names. Valid file names may only include the following characters: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore(_), hyphen (-), space ( ), and period (.). **If applicants use any other characters when naming their attachment files, their applications will be rejected by grants.gov.** Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the "Completed Documents for Submission" boxes, click the "Save" button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary. Please use the following format when saving your file: "Applicant Name – FY21 – Funding Opportunity – 1st Submission" or "Applicant Name – FY21 – Funding Opportunity – Back-up Submission." If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to "Applicant Name – FY21 – Funding Opportunity– 2nd Submission."

Once your application package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

In the "Application Filing Name" box, your AOR should enter your organization's name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (*e.g.*, FY21), and the grant funding opportunity. The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the "Grant Application Package" page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the "Submit" button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, they may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-

4726 or email at support@grants.gov or they may contact Rachel Houge via email at: GMP-RFP@epa.gov

Applications submitted through https://www.grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. *If an applicant submits duplicate application packages, the application with the most recent time stamp will be reviewed.* Older versions will not be reviewed.

Technical Issues with Submission

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

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

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

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

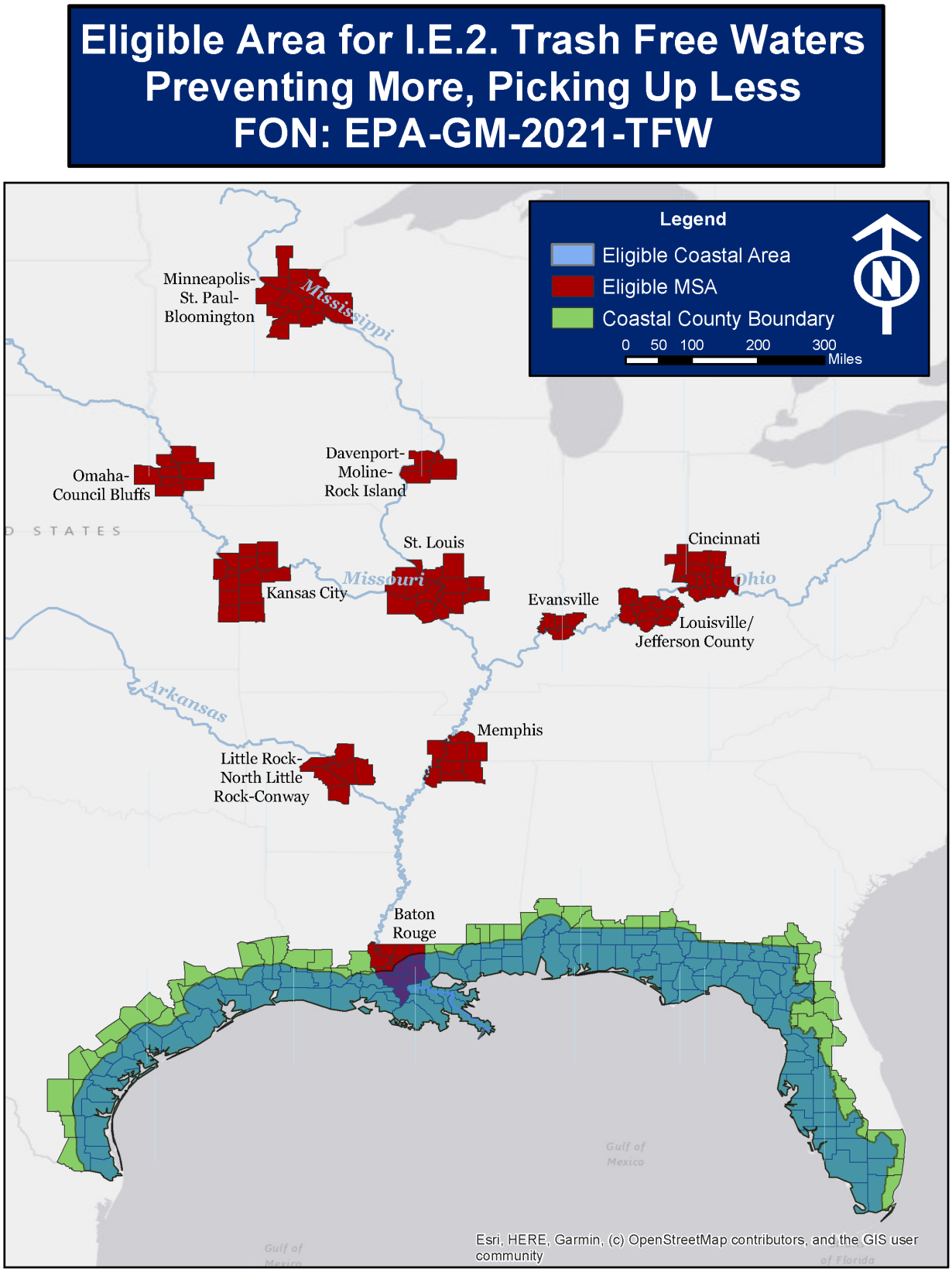
3.a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call www.Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545- 5035. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Rachel Houge at gmp-rfp@epa.gov.

3.b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to gmp-rfp@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.

3.c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to gmp-rfp@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

NOTE: Successful submission through Grants.gov or via email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

Appendix B. Helpful Links

1. For assistance in filling out forms, please see the Common Errors document found on EPA's Gulf of Mexico Division website. Follow the Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico 2021 RFA Announcement for the document and other RFA information.
2. For EPA guidance on budget development, please follow this link.

Appendix C. Eligible Area for I.E.2. Trash Free Waters - FON: EPA-GM-2021-TFW