

## Notice of Funding Opportunity

Applications Due: **Monday, June 22, 2026**



**Gulf of America Division**

# Farmer-to-Farmer 2025

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-I-R4-GAD-2025-FARMER



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# 1. Basic Information

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Gulf of America Division

### Farmer-to-Farmer 2025

<https://www.epa.gov/gulfofamerica>

#### A. Executive Summary

The Gulf of America Division (“GAD”), located in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) Region 4, is part of the EPA Great Water Body program that collaborates to protect, maintain, and restore the health and productivity of the Gulf of America consistent with the economic well-being of the region. EPA’s actions are designed to support improved water quality; to enhance, restore and/or protect natural habitats; and to improve the region’s ability to withstand storm events. This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications to improve water quality and/or habitat through collaboration with America’s farmers. Applications must align with the Administration’s ["Powering the Great American Comeback"](#) initiative and align with EPA statutory authorities. Activities must take place in the Gulf of America watershed and/or within the United States contiguous zone in the Gulf of America. This opportunity is targeted to organizations described in Section 2.A. that are committed to supporting American farmers and preventing, reducing, or eliminating nutrient pollution while remaining good stewards of tax dollars.

#### B. Key Information:

**Opportunity Number:**

EPA-I-R4-GAD-2025-FARMER

**Assistance Listing:**

66.475

**Announcement Type:**

Initial

**Funding Available:**

\$50,000,000

**Number of Awards:**

Approximately 20-30

#### C. Key Dates:

**June 5, 2026**

Last day GAD will respond to questions submitted to GAD-NOFO@epa.gov. A recorded presentation to aid in application development and a Q&A and common errors document will be posted at <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofamerica/>. Questions not included in the Q&A or presentation, may be submitted to GAD-NOFO@epa.gov. The Q&A will be updated weekly if new questions are received. EPA cannot guarantee a response to questions received after this date.

June 22, 2026 11:59 pm ET

Application Submission Deadline

September 2026

Anticipated Notification of Selection

December 2026

Anticipated Award Notification

## D. Funding Details:

It is anticipated that up to **approximately 30 awards** will be made under this announcement. The amount of funding is expected to be **between \$1,500,000 and \$2,500,000 per award**, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. Awards funded under this opportunity are expected to have a **5-year** project period.

## E. Agency Contact Information:

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

Technical Contact: **Matt Beiser; GAD-NOFO@epa.gov**

Eligibility Contact: **Matt Beiser; GAD-NOFO@epa.gov**

Electronic Submissions Contact: **Matt Beiser; GAD-NOFO@epa.gov**

## F. Other Funding Considerations

It is anticipated that 5-8 awards may be made for each focus area: Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship, Demonstrating Regenerative Farming Benefits through Monitoring, Innovative Technologies for Regenerative Farming, or Habitat Improvement for Nutrient and Soil Management. On the summary information page, **the applicant must declare the primary focus area the project should be evaluated under** and indicate any secondary focus areas. The actual award amounts and number of projects awarded may differ from the estimated amounts for many reasons, including: the number of meritorious applications received, agency priorities, and funding availability. Additionally, EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number of awards and/or the number of awards under each priority or change the ratio of assistance agreements it awards among the focus areas.

# 2. Eligibility

## A. Eligible Applicants

Only these types of organizations may apply:

- [Indian Tribe](#).
- [State & Local Governments](#).
- [Institutions of Higher Education \(IHEs\)](#).
- [Nonprofit organizations](#) (except as described below).

These types of organizations are NOT eligible to apply:

- International organizations.
- 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.
- [For-profit organizations](#).
- [Federal agencies](#).
- Individuals.

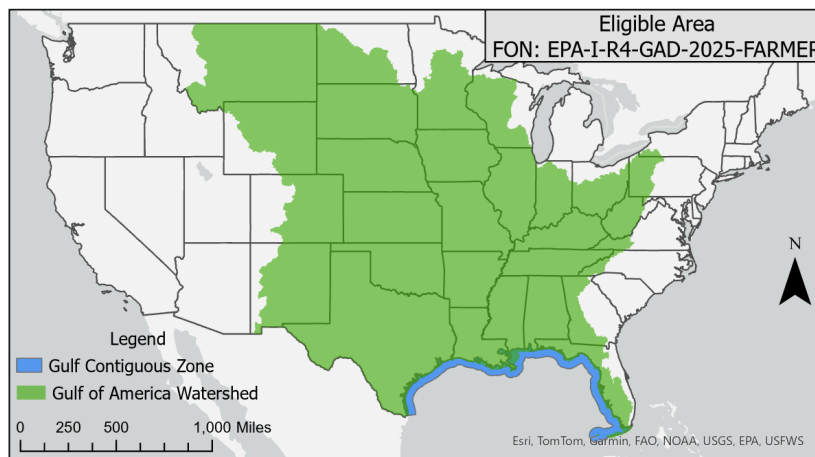
## (1) Other Eligibility Requirements

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

- Location:** Applications must include activities taking place
  - Within the Gulf of America watershed  
AND/OR
  - Within the United States contiguous zone in the Gulf of America.The application will be rejected if activities are proposed outside of the eligible area (see map in Figure 1 and table in [Section 9](#)).
- Content:** Applications must substantially comply with the requirements in [Sections 3.A\(1\)](#), [3.A\(2\)](#), and [4.A](#). of this announcement or risk being ruled ineligible.
- Project Focus Area:** Applications must identify the primary focus area (i.e., Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship, Demonstrating Regenerative Farming Benefits through Monitoring, Innovative Technologies for regenerative Farming, or Habitat Improvement for Nutrient and Soil Management) that the project should be evaluated under on the summary information page, according to [Section 1.F](#).
- Environmental Results:** Applications must include anticipated environmental results (Outputs and Outcomes) as required in [Section 3.A\(3\)](#).
- Funding:** Funding requested must be between \$1,500,000 and \$2,500,000.
- Budget:** Applications must include detailed budget information in addition to the mandatory SF-424A form (see [Section 4.A](#)). A detailed budget narrative is mandatory and must be included in the 12-page project narrative. Use of the GAD budget table is highly recommended and is not counted against the page limit. The budget information in the application must include all proposed budget subcategories and how requested funds support each of the tasks proposed in the workplan. There must be sufficient detail for EPA to determine the amount of funds going to each individual task.
- Submission Deadline:** Initial applications must be submitted *on or before* the application deadline through Grants.gov or through limited circumstances as expressed in [Section 5](#). The EPA will not evaluate applications that are not submitted on time.
- Duplication:** For applications submitted more than once, the applicant will be contacted to determine which application should be evaluated. The remaining application(s) will be deemed ineligible.

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

**Figure 1: Eligible Area**, see <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofamerica/> for an interactive map.



## **(2) Ineligible activities**

If an application is submitted where any portion 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 Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) or Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permits (MS4 permits)).
- Solely “gray infrastructure” projects (e.g., installation of sewer lines).
- Projects whose sole purpose is to improve Federal lands. Any improvements to Federal land must be incidental to the overall purpose of the project and review by EPA legal personnel is required before the activity on Federal land commences.

***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; 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.

## **B. Cost Sharing**

Cost sharing is not a requirement to be eligible to apply to this funding opportunity. Please note only Federal funds should be listed on the SF-424, SF-424A, and Budget Detail.

## 3. Program Description

### A. Purpose, Priorities, and Activities

#### (1) Purpose and Priorities of the Funding Opportunity

The Gulf of America Division (GAD) is one of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Great Water Body programs, founded to facilitate collaborative actions that protect, maintain, and restore the health and productivity of the Gulf of America in ways consistent with the economic well-being of the region. GAD's top priorities are to improve water quality; to enhance, restore and/or protect habitats; and to improve the region's ability to withstand storm events. The purpose of this funding opportunity is to generate applications that align with the Administration's "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative, support GAD's priorities to improve water quality and habitat, and advance nutrient reduction actions consistent with state Nutrient Reduction Strategies and/or Nonpoint Source Management Program plans. Proposals should also align with GAD's statutory authority (see [Section 3.C](#)) for demonstration projects that prevent, reduce, or eliminate nutrient pollution. This funding opportunity aligns with GAD's objective to remain good stewards of tax-payer dollars while advancing this mission.

[Eutrophication](#) caused by excess nutrients is a continuing and growing challenge in water bodies with profound implications for public health, water quality, and the economy. Waterways across much of North America transport large quantities of excess nutrients to the Gulf of America and contribute to the development of hypoxic conditions, or low dissolved oxygen. Large hypoxic areas, often called "dead zones," can result in fish kills, a general decrease in aquatic life, and challenges for commercial and recreational fishermen. Regenerative farming practices are needed across the watershed to reduce the nutrient concentrations entering the Gulf of America.

Farmers are often the first line of defense in reducing nonpoint source pollution of nutrients across America's working lands. They have developed innovative practices and leadership models to share their knowledge with others. By funding new or experimental techniques and emphasizing data collection and farmer engagement, the Farmer-to-Farmer program can help producers test and scale regenerative practices. Additionally, regenerative agriculture practices can play a key role in improving water quality and habitat. As defined in USDA's NRCS Regenerative Pilot Program, regenerative agriculture is a conservation management approach that emphasizes natural resources through improved soil health, water management, and natural vitality for the productivity and prosperity of American agriculture and communities. This approach closely aligns with Make America Healthy Again Strategy, which states EPA will promote and incentivize farming solutions that focus on soil health and stewardship of the land. This includes, but is not limited to, prioritizing practices that farmers want and trust, such as: Prescribed Grazing, Soil Health Systems, Improved Pollinator Management, and Water Management to keep working lands profitable and productive. This approach also aligns with the Make America Beautiful Again Strategy, by promoting responsible stewardship of natural resources while driving economic growth, and encouraging responsible, voluntary conservation efforts. The innovative management of working lands through regenerative agriculture offers a unique opportunity to restore land health, improve long-term productivity, and ensure American grown production for the future.

Every state implements a [Nonpoint Source Management Program](#) under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act that prioritizes and emphasizes actions needed to improve water quality from nonpoint sources at the watershed scale. Additionally, 30 states (including 25 states eligible for this opportunity) are

implementing a [Nutrient Reduction Strategy](#), which is a comprehensive framework aimed at identifying significant contributions of nutrient pollution and actions to minimize and reduce nutrient runoff. Proposals should demonstrate consistency with activities laid out in these management strategies to effectively address nutrient pollution. This includes, but is not limited to, prioritizing actions that advance state priorities described in Plans/Strategies, such as: enhancing edge-of-field water quality monitoring, evaluating the effectiveness of new technologies or conservation practices novel to a watershed, increasing stakeholder engagement via partner-led trainings, supporting farmer-led demonstrations, and employing new outreach approaches to increase participation of absentee landowners.

For this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), EPA is defining “**farmer**” as those individuals that make management decisions concerning agriculture lands, including cropland, forestland, and grazing lands. Collaboration and/or coalitions between organizations are encouraged, including collaboration that increases knowledge transfer.

For this NOFO, “**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 application 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 NOFO. If a project uses technologies, methods or approaches that have been used previously in other geographic areas and/or other situations, then the proposal must include an explanation of how the demonstration project is different from those prior projects. The applicant must also explain what will be learned from the demonstration project.

For more information, please see: <https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/epas-ongoing-efforts-reduce-nutrient-pollution>.

## **(2) Activities of the Funding Opportunity**

This funding opportunity seeks applications that **propose a water quality and/or habitat improvement project** designed for one of the four focus areas listed below and located **within the Gulf of America watershed** that will advance state-identified nutrient reduction priorities. Activities proposed in the Gulf of America must be limited to the United States contiguous zone (see [Figure 1](#) and [Section 9](#)). The list below includes a brief summary statement of the four focus areas. **A more detailed description of what is required for each focus area is provided later in this section.**

1. **Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship:** Projects must focus on Farmer-to-Farmer mentoring (knowledge transfer) and incentives that help farmers adopt regenerative farming practices over 3-5 years.
2. **Demonstrating Regenerative Farming Benefits through Monitoring:** Assess the effects of new or existing regenerative farming practices and/or the adoption of innovative technology on nutrient reduction/erosion to watersheds.
3. **Innovative Technologies for Regenerative Farming:** Develop, improve, and/or demonstrate farming practices and/or innovative technologies that improve water quality by reducing nutrient and/or erosion.
4. **Habitat Improvement for Nutrient and Soil Management:** Work collaboratively with farmers to protect habitat through habitat creation, restoration, and/or enhancement.

Along with selecting a focus area, all applicants are encouraged to incorporate **the development, utilization, or expansion of innovative technologies** in at least one of the following areas:

- Demonstrate how artificial intelligence (AI) and/or machine learning (ML) can be utilized to enhance water quality or habitat monitoring, management, or restoration efforts throughout the Gulf of America watershed.
- Develop new or expand the capability of existing innovative technology (including precision agriculture technologies like robotics, yield monitoring and mapping, in-ground and proximity sensors, etc.) to improve water quality and/or habitat monitoring, management, or restoration.
- Deploy Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (“UAV,” i.e., drone) for critical project activities, to assess success within the targeted farms and watersheds, and/or to support effective mentorship through improved information collection.

The following links may be helpful during application development:

- [State Nonpoint Source Management Plans](#)
- [Resources for Watershed Planning](#)
- [Data, Models, and Other Technical Resources for a Watershed Approach](#)

### **Focus Area 1: Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship**

Farmers are more likely to adopt regenerative practices when there is a strong network of support (financial, technical, and peer) available and when information comes from a trusted source.

Applications submitted under this focus area should help farmers adopt regenerative farming practices over 3-5 years through Farmer-to-Farmer mentoring (knowledge transfer) and incentives. Projects should improve water quality and/or habitat through demonstration of regenerative farming practices and/or technologies (new or existing) that reduce nutrient loss and/or erosion. Applicants are encouraged to increase efficacy of projects through other complementary projects that will support a greater outcome for all projects. All applicants should identify how their proposed demonstration project could lead to cost savings and economic benefits for farmers.

Applications under this focus area **must propose a Farmer-to-Farmer mentoring project** and include details on the following:

- Create a mentoring plan that will help farmers develop and adopt Regenerative farming strategies. Mentoring and participating farmers should have compatible farming operations or attributes to ensure that knowledge shared is relevant and increases the likelihood of success.
- Describe regenerative agriculture practices that enhance nutrient retention on farmland.
- Describe how incentives will be utilized to promote long term adoption of regenerative farming practices by farmers. The project plan should explain how incentives will help farmers accept risks associated with the new strategy and help offset costs of the regenerative farming methods being adopted.
- Track and report the duration regenerative farming practices are used and estimate the nutrient load reduction. Consider contacting the relevant [Nonpoint Source Program](#) to learn about models currently used to estimate pollutant loads and reductions needed to result in improved water quality at the watershed scale.
- Demonstrate benefits that adopted regenerative farming practices will have on participating farms (soil/water/costs/etc.).
- Incorporate group events (e.g. farm days) to highlight the lessons learned by all participating farmers. Events should initially take place on mentor farms and later move to participant farms as

regenerative practices are adopted. Describe how sharing tangible benefits of adopted practices will increase adoption of practices into the future and thus perpetually reduce nutrient loss.

### **Focus Area 2: Demonstrating Regenerative Farming Benefits through Monitoring**

To improve Regenerative farming practices and to maximize nutrient reduction, long term monitoring efforts are necessary to understand which strategies are best suited for different regions. Applications submitted under this focus area should examine the effects of new or existing Regenerative farming practices, and/or adoption of new or existing innovative technology, on nutrient reduction and erosion in watersheds. Projects should improve farmer and water quality knowledge by describing how monitoring will generate new and/or expand existing datasets that will determine which innovative strategies or technologies are best suited to reduce nutrient pollution and erosion in the future. Monitoring can be completed in fields, water segments, water bodies, watersheds, or offshore to demonstrate the effects these farming strategies or technologies will have on water quality. Applicants are encouraged to increase efficacy of projects through other complementary projects that will support a greater outcome for all projects. Applicants should identify how monitoring efforts could lead to cost savings and economic benefits in the future.

Applications under this focus area **must propose a monitoring project** and include details that address the following:

- Define the monitoring objective.
- Describe the geographic area where monitoring efforts will occur.
- Explain why and how, including frequency, each parameter will be monitored for the duration of the project.
- Identify where and which specific regenerative farming practices and/or innovative nutrient reducing technologies have been or will be used that will be the basis for the monitoring effort.
- Describe how the dataset will benefit stakeholders. (e.g. cost savings, economic benefit, environmental benefits, water quality improvement, improved soil health, best practice selection, etc.).

### **Focus Area 3: Innovative Technologies for Regenerative Farming**

Farmers are more likely to adopt regenerative farming practices and/or innovative technologies with direct benefits that are observable. Applications submitted under this focus area should develop, improve, and/or demonstrate farming practices and/or innovative technologies that improve water quality by reducing nutrient loss and/or erosion. Applicants are encouraged to increase efficacy of projects through other complimentary projects that will support a greater outcome for all projects. Applicants should identify how their project plan could lead to cost savings and economic benefits in the future.

Applications under this focus area **must propose a demonstration project focused on Innovative Technologies for Regenerative Farming** and include details that will focus on the following areas.

- Describe the regenerative farming practices and/or innovative technologies that will be developed, improved, and/or demonstrated.
- Discuss observable results that will support increased adoption of regenerative practices and/or technologies.
- Describe how the application of practices and/or technologies may be scaled to different locations (local or regional) to increase environmental benefit/s.

- Describe cost savings and economic benefits resulting from practices and/or technologies (e.g. nutrients recaptured and applied as fertilizer may reduce fertilizer expenses in the future).

#### **Focus Area 4: Habitat Improvement for Nutrient and Soil Management**

Farmers have strong stewardship ethics but must balance stewardship with cost effectiveness. Applications submitted under this focus area should provide a plan to collaborate with farmers in protecting habitat through habitat creation, restoration, and/or enhancement. Projects should describe how specific habitat/s will be created, restored, and/or enhanced and how they will improve water quality by reducing nutrients and/or erosion. Applicants are encouraged to increase efficacy of projects through other complementary projects that will support a greater outcome for all projects. Applicants should identify how their project plan could lead to cost savings and economic benefits in the future.

All applications **must propose a project focused on creation, restoration, and/or enhancement of habitat** and include the following details:

- Describe how specific habitat/s will be created, enhanced, and/or restored that reduce nutrient loss and erosion.
- Describe how the resulting habitat will improve water quality by reducing nutrients and/or erosion.
- Design a monitoring plan that will highlight the water quality benefits of the project.
- Explain how the project and water quality benefits are transferrable to other locations.
- Describe any ancillary benefits of project activities (e.g. benefits to: habitat connectivity, wildlife corridors, pollinators, critical habitats, threatened and endangered species, floodplain connectivity, wilding land, etc., expanded access to outdoor recreation, including hunting or fishing, and/or contributions to recovering America’s fish and wildlife populations).

### **(3) Environmental Results**

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

**Outputs:** Outputs are an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced or provided over time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during the project period. The expected outputs for the grants awarded under these guidelines **must** include at least one of the following:

- Number of habitat acres created, restored, enhanced, and/or protected.
- Number of water bodies or segments where there is improved understanding of water quality conditions through monitoring and/or modeling.
- Number of water bodies or segments where there is a positive change in a physical, chemical, and/or biological water quality parameter.
- Number of individuals reached through meaningful interaction during environmental awareness activities.

Additional outputs for the grants awarded under these guidelines may include, but are not limited to:

- Number of farmer events/presentations.
- Visual documentation (UAV/Drone imagery) of watershed change as a result of project activities.
- Economic benefits analysis.
- Number of acres receiving technical and/or financial assistance for regenerative farming practices and duration the practice was in place.
- Number of fields and/or water segments monitored.
- Report to stakeholders on the benefit of project activities (savings, environmental, economical, etc.).
- Innovative technology or strategy used for water conservation.

**Outcomes:** Outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out the activities under the grant. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic; must be qualitative or quantitative. The expected outcomes for the grants awarded under these guidelines **must** include at least one of the following:

- Explain the environmental benefits resulting from technical and/or financial assistance.
- Explain the environmental benefits resulting from acres of habitat created, restored, enhanced, and/or protected **for the duration of the project.**
- Explain the improvement in at least one nutrient-related water quality parameter in a water body and/or segment and the resulting environmental benefits for the water body and/or segment during **the duration of the project.**
- Explain how meaningful interaction during farmer-to-farmer events resulted in the adoption of regenerative farming practices at additional farms. Include the acreage over which regenerative farming practices were adopted at farms that were not participating in the project.

**\*\*\*Additional appropriate outputs and outcomes accomplished because of project activities should also be included.**

**Example outputs and outcomes table:**

Output	Outcome
Number of experiments or samples, number of reports or publications.	Advancement in knowledge on the effects of pollution as reflected in a peer reviewed scientific journal article.
Number of farmers attending a farm day event at a mentoring farm.	Event attendees apply regenerative farming practices on their own farms.

See [EPA Order 5700.7A1: EPA’s Policy for Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for more information about outputs and outcomes. 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.

## **B. Program Goals and Objectives**

The activities to be funded under this announcement support Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American and, as applicable, Pillar 4: Make the United States the Artificial Intelligence Capital of the World of [Administrator Zeldin's Five Pillars](#).

The activities to be funded under this announcement will improve water quality, land health and long-term productivity of America's working lands. In addition, the development, utilization, or expansion of innovative technologies related to the Farmer-to-Farmer program have the potential to improve efficiency, adoption rates, and economic viability of regenerative agriculture practices.

### **C. Statutory Authority**

GAD's statutory authority to award assistance agreements is the Clean Water Act, §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 as codified in 33 U.S Code 1254(b)(3). Further noting that "hypoxia continues to be a growing cause for concern," the legislature has directed the EPA's Gulf of America Program to "coordinate with the 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." See Congressional Record, 2025 (Division E, Title II: Environmental Protection Agency, p. 632-633), <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/volume-170/issue-39/senate-section>. Furthermore, the 2024 (Pub. L. 118-42) and 2025 (Pub. L. 119-4, Sect. 1101(a)(7)) Fiscal Year Appropriations Acts have appropriated funding to carry out the purpose highlighted in this explanatory statement.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity is being offered under Assistance Listing [66.475](#).

### **D. Funding Type**

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

### **E. Requirements for Increasing Access to Results of EPA-Funded Extramural Scientific Research**

It is EPA Policy to ensure that the results of EPA-funded extramural scientific research are accessible to the public to the greatest extent feasible consistent with applicable law; policies and Orders; the Agency's mission; resource constraints; and U.S. national, homeland and economic security. This entails maximizing, at no charge, access by the public to peer-reviewed, scientific research journal publications or associated author manuscripts, and their underlying digital research data, created in whole or in part with EPA funds, while protecting personal privacy; recognizing proprietary interests, confidential business information and intellectual property rights; and avoiding significant negative impact on intellectual property rights, innovation, and U.S. competitiveness. EPA's Policy for Increasing Access to Results of EPA-Funded Extramural Scientific Research may be accessed at: [Non-EPA Researcher Requirements](#). Terms and conditions implementing this policy may be accessed at: [Non-EPA Researcher Requirements](#). Applications submitted under this funding opportunity shall include a Scientific Data Management Plan (SDMP) that addresses public access to EPA-funded scientific research data. See the SDMP clause in Section 4 for details on the content of an SDMP. Applicants will also be asked to provide past performance information on whether journal publications or associated author manuscripts, and the associated underlying scientific research data and metadata, under prior assistance agreements were made publicly accessible. These items will be evaluated prior to award.

Reasonable, necessary, and allocable costs for data management and public access as discussed in EPA's Policy for Increasing Access to Results of EPA-Funded Extramural Scientific Research may be included in extramural research applications and detailed in the budget justification described in Section 4 or as otherwise directed.

## 4. Application Contents and Format

### A. Application Forms

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

***Mandatory Documents:***

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

***Optional Documents:***

7. Other Attachments Form: Budget Table (highly recommended)
8. Other Attachments Form: Resumes or Curriculum Vitae
9. Other Attachments Form: Letters of Support
10. Other Attachments Form: letter of determination that verifies 501(c)(3) status, if applicable
11. Other Attachments Form: Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable
12. Other Attachments Form: Use this to submit other attachments, if applicable

Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.

Select a legible font type no smaller than an 11- point Calibri font for use in the application.

- The project narrative cannot exceed a maximum of 12 - 8½" x 11" single-spaced typewritten pages with 1" margins, including the summary page, workplan, and detailed budget narrative.
- Do not use a "double column" (aka newspaper) format. Excess pages (i.e., longer than 12 pages) will not be reviewed.
- Do not include more than one application in any file.
- 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.

**The project narrative must substantially comply with the specific instructions, format, and content as shown below or it will be rejected.**

### B. Project Narrative Description

**Project Narrative Attachment Form:** Includes the Summary Information Page, Project Workplan, Detailed Budget Narrative, and Maps. The project narrative must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the threshold eligibility criteria in [Section 2.A\(1\)](#), the requirements of [Section 3](#), and address the review criteria set forth in [Section 6.B](#). Supporting materials, such as project team biographies, letters of support, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreements can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 12-page limit. Supporting materials should be submitted using the "Optional Attachments" form.

### Project Narrative Format

The narrative has a 12-page limit including the summary information page. Budget tables, citations, maps, and quality assurance statement (required for awards over \$200,000) do not count towards the page limit and should be included at the end of the document.

#### **SUMMARY INFORMATION PAGE (SHOULD NOT EXCEED ONE PAGE)**

- **Funding Opportunity and FON:** [EPA-I-R4-GAD-2025-FARMER](#) “Farmer-to-Farmer 2025”
- **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 UEI number. Do not include private information.
- **Type of Organization:** Specify, consistent with your SF-424, one of the following eligible entities:
  - [Indian Tribes](#).
  - [State & Local Governments](#).
  - [Institutions of Higher Education \(IHEs\)](#).
  - [Nonprofit organizations](#).
- **Proposed Funding Request:** The total dollar amount requested from EPA must be within the limits specified in [Section 2.A.1](#) or the application will be rejected.
- **Project Period:** Provide anticipated project start and end dates. (See in [Section 1.D](#)).
- **Project Focus Area:** Applicant **must** declare the primary focus area (i.e., Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship, Demonstrating Regenerative Farming Benefits through Monitoring, Innovative Technologies for Regenerative Farming, or Habitat Improvement for Nutrient and Soil Management) that the project should be evaluated under and indicate any secondary focus areas included.
- **Project Description:** Clearly and succinctly summarize the proposed project. This should be done in 100 words or less. Include environmental KEY TERMS that could be used as search terms (e.g., water quality, nutrient reduction, innovation, machine learning). Do not use acronyms. If the application is selected and a grant is awarded, this description may be posted to an EPA website. EPA reserves the right to make unilateral changes to conform to posting requirements.
- **Environmental Results:** Describe major anticipated environmental results from this project.
- **Place of Performance:** Activities must take place within the Gulf of America watershed and/or within the United States contiguous zone in the Gulf of America. **For more details on eligible locations, please see [Section 2.A.1](#), Figure 1, and [Section 9.A.2](#).**
  - Identify the location(s) where project activities will take place.
  - Specify a single, representative project location, including 8- or 12-digit HUC code. The HUC may be identified using the map at the NOFO link on <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofamerica> and zooming into the project area of interest. Please identify a single, representative location even if the work will be done at multiple locations. 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, or congressional districts where work will be performed. If your project includes more than five locations, select the five that best represent the project.

**PROJECT WORKPLAN** (must not exceed 11 pages, excess pages will not be reviewed)

Applicants must ensure that the workplan addresses the review criteria in [Section 6.B](#) of the NOFO. Applicants should use the section and subsection numbers and headings below which correspond with the review criteria in [Section 6.B](#) of the NOFO.

**Section 1. Project Design:**

Provide detailed descriptions of activities. Refer to [Sections 3.A, 3.B](#), and [6.B](#) for specific application requirements and scoring information:

**A. What:** Describe what the project will do. List out all major tasks for the project.

- Describe at least one of the four allowable demonstration projects as described in [Section 3.A](#).
- Describe which innovative activities and/or technologies will be used and what will be accomplished.
- Describe the monitoring activities that will be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of project activities.
- Describe the economic benefit analysis procedure that will be used to show cost effectiveness of activities in this project.

**Why:** Describe why you are proposing this project and the goal(s) of the project.

**How:** Describe how the activities and tasks proposed will be used to accomplish the innovative priorities of this NOFO.

- Describe how the project activities were determined and how activities will reduce nutrient pollution and/or erosion. Applications should demonstrate proof of concept by providing literature citations or providing studies supporting proposed activities. (Citations should be included in the Narrative Proposal but will not be counted in the page limit.)
- Describe how innovative technologies were chosen and how technologies will be leveraged to support project activities. If applicable, describe how artificial intelligence and machine learning can be used to enhance water quality monitoring, farmer-to-farmer mentorship, or habitat.

**Where:** Describe where the project will take place and why choosing this location will provide the greatest nutrient reduction outcomes for the Gulf of America. Include a map in Section 9 of the narrative that delineates the project boundaries and/or shows the expected location(s) of project(s).

Additional Project Design Details: Include appropriate additional information as described in [Section 3](#).

**B. Statutory Authority:**

Explain how your project meets the following:

- **Clean Water Act 104(b)(3):** Explain how the project meets [GAD's statutory authority](#) in Clean Water Act 104(b)(3).
- **EPA's "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative:** Explain how the project meets Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American, and if applicable, Pillar 4: Make the United States the Artificial Intelligence Capital of the World of EPA's "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative.

**Section 2. Innovative Technology:**

Provide details on the use of new or expansion of existing innovative technologies that enhance monitoring or management of nutrient pollution and **how** the use of those innovative technologies could lead to cost savings and economic benefits in the future. In addition, describe the relevance of the innovative technology to the farming community(ies).

**Section 3. Economic Benefits Analysis:**

Provide details for how activities and/or innovation(s) will lead to cost savings and economic benefits in the future. Applications should clearly describe how proposed activities and/or innovation(s) will be evaluated alongside existing or commonly used practices to determine cost effectiveness.

**Section 4. Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes:**

Specify the estimated quantitative and qualitative results (outputs and outcomes) of the proposed project including, but not limited to, those specifically identified in [Section 3.A.3](#) and any other measurable outputs and outcomes. Points will be deducted if no quantitative targets are identified.

**Section 5. Milestone Schedule:**

Provide a timetable or schedule with target dates projected for every major task, accomplishments and deliverables for each task, including development and submittal of quality assurance documents (if applicable), quarterly progress reports, and final reports. Providing milestones in quarterly increments per year is encouraged to correlate with progress reporting. The link between the activities and achievement of identified outputs and outcomes should be clear.

**Section 6. Past Performance and Programmatic Capability:**

Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that the applicant's organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe:

- A. If and how the applicant's organization successfully completed and managed those agreements;
- B. The applicant's history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether progress reports adequately and timely reported on progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (if not, explain why) and whether acceptable final technical reports were submitted under the agreements; and
- C. The applicant's history of whether journal publications or author manuscripts associated with the journal publications, and the associated underlying scientific research data and metadata, resulting from the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 6 of the [Project Design](#) in the Project Narrative Format were made publicly accessible, and if not whether the applicant adequately explained why not, or the applicant explained why the requirement does not apply,
- D. The applicant's organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and
- E. The applicant's staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in [Section 6.B](#), EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and a neutral

score will be given for subfactors A, B, and C. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, then the applicant will receive a score of 0 for these criteria.

**Section 7. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds:**

Describe the applicant’s approach, procedures, and internal controls to ensure awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. **Applicants should describe how these internal controls will prevent waste, fraud, and abuse in the expenditure of this award.**

**Section 8. Detailed Budget Narrative:**

The applicant must provide a detailed budget with estimated funding requested **for each project task**. A detailed budget narrative is mandatory and must be included in the 12-page workplan (see [Section 2.A](#)). Use of the suggested budget table template is highly recommended (not mandatory) and is not counted against the 12-page limit. Regardless of format used, the budget information in the application should provide sufficient detail for EPA to determine cost-effectiveness, reasonableness, and allowability of costs. It must include all proposed budget subcategories on the SF-424A, if applicable (Personnel, Fringe, Travel, Supplies, Equipment, Contractual, Other and Indirect); the amount requested per subcategory and a detailed description of what the funds will be used for; and how requested funds support each of the tasks proposed in the workplan. **There must be sufficient detail for EPA to determine how much of the requested funds are going to be allocated to each project task. The budget should indicate which tasks can be scaled down or removed to reduce overall budget requests as the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions of proposed projects.**

The budget narrative provides greater detail about tasks in the budget table. Common examples include: 1) description of the roles and responsibilities of personnel, 2) description of what supplies will be used for, 3) description of why the equipment is needed and why purchase is preferable to rental of equipment, 4) description of activities of the contract, whether it will be sole sourced or competed, and why that choice was made, and 5) description of activities of a subrecipient, etc. All subaward funding should be located under the “Other Direct Cost” cost category. Please see EPA’s [Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#) for more information.

**Section 9. Map(s)** (not counted in page limit):

Include a map that delineates the project boundaries and/or shows the expected location(s) of the project(s).

**Section 10. Quality Assurance** (not counted in page limit):

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

If the applicant or subrecipients plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain compliance with the QA requirements (see [Section 4.D.1](#) Quality Assurance of this announcement for additional information).

## C. Applicants Using Contractors

Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the [procurement provisions](#) of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200.

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

The EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subrecipients and/or named contractor(s) during the application evaluation process unless the applicant provides documentation that it has complied with these requirements.

For additional guidance, applicants should review [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#), [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#), and [EPA’s Subaward Policy Frequent Questions](#). The EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500, as well as the requirements in 2 CFR Part 200.321 and 40 CFR Part 33 Subpart C.

## D. Other Program Specific Application Information

### (1) Quality Assurance

Assistance agreements that involve environmental information and that are expected to exceed \$200,000 (in federal funding) shall develop a written quality assurance (QA) system commensurate with the degree of confidence needed for environmentally related data operations as defined in 2 CFR 1500.12. Environmental information is defined as data and information that describe environmental processes or conditions which support EPA’s mission to protect human health and the environment. Environmental information includes, but is not limited to, data from direct measurements or analytical testing results; data produced from environmental modeling; and data compiled from other sources such as databases or literature.

GAD uses a graded approach to QA requirements for recipients depending on the environmental information being collected and how it will be used. Prior to collecting environmental information, the recipient must develop and implement QA procedures, specifications, and documentation sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives through a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and/or a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). A QMP is an organization-specific document that describes the quality control, policies, qualifications, and procedures for planning, implementing, and evaluating work and may apply to multiple projects. A QAPP is a project-specific planning document that describes comprehensive details about the QA requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure the project objectives are met and are of sufficient and known quality. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with [EPA Directive No: CIO 2105-S-01.1](#): Quality Management Plan Standard, and the QAPP should be prepared in accordance with [EPA Directive No: CIO 2105-S-02.1](#): Quality Assurance Project Plan Standard. EPA can assist successful applicants in determining which QA document(s) is(are) required for the proposed project. The recipient shall ensure that subrecipients generating or using environmental information issued under this agreement include appropriate quality requirements for the work. The recipient shall ensure those subrecipients develop and implement QA

planning document(s) in accordance with EPA Quality policy and terms and conditions of the award. The QMP and/or QAPP must be approved by EPA prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Successful applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process.

Organizations may be granted an exception or modification to the QMP requirement if they meet certain criteria which may include, but are not limited to, one-time, short-term, and special projects or projects of limited scope; and/or organizations generating, collecting, compiling, and/or using environmental data for public education purposes. EPA requirements for QMPs and QAPPs can be found here: <http://www.epa.gov/grants/implementation-quality-assurance-requirements-organizations-receiving-epa-financial>.

## **(2) Water Quality Exchange**

If water quality data are generated, either directly or by the subrecipient, the recipient must ensure that all data are transmitted into the Agency's Data Warehouse annually or by project completion using the Water Quality Exchange ("WQX") in accordance with an EPA approved QAPP. Appropriate water quality data include physical, chemical, and biological sample results for water, sediment, and fish tissue. The data may include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. WQX is an online tool for EPA data partners to upload and share data with EPA and the public. Water quality data collected using continuous monitors, either by the recipient or subrecipient, are not required to be uploaded into the EPA Data Warehouse. More information about WQX, including tutorials can be found at: [www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data-wqx](http://www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data-wqx).

## **(3) Scientific Data Management Plan (SDMP)**

The EPA will evaluate the merits of the SDMPs for those applications recommended for award. The SDMPs for those applications not recommended for award will not be reviewed. The SDMPs of all applications recommended for award will be evaluated to ensure they are appropriate and adequate (e.g., describe the types of scientific research data and metadata to be collected and/or generated under the proposed research award and include plans for providing long-term preservation of, and public access to, the scientific research data and metadata). SDMPs that indicate the proposed research will not result in the generation and/or collection of scientific research data will also be evaluated to ensure the proposed research will not result in the generation and/or collection of scientific research data and therefore not require a more comprehensive SDMP. Applicants may be contacted regarding their SDMP if additional information is needed or if revisions are required prior to award. If upon review of the SDMP, EPA identifies any issues with the plan, EPA will raise these issues to the applicant, so they may be addressed. Applicants with an unsatisfactory SDMP will not receive an award.

## 5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

### A. Submission Dates and Times

June 22, 2026 11:59 pm ET

Application Submission Deadline

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

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

#### SAM.gov

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

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

#### Grants.gov

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

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

### C. Submission Instructions

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

Important tips:

- To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to Grants.gov and click the red “Apply” button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.
- See the Quick Start Guide for Applicants for instructions on how to submit.
- Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks.
- Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.
- Your application must be submitted by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance.
- If you receive an error or the button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization’s EBiz point of contact or contact Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).
- See Grants.gov Errors for information on other Grants.gov errors.
- The UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

## D. Technical Issues with Submission

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

- Contact Grants.gov Support Center before the application deadline date.
- Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- Send an email with Funding Opportunity Number (FON): EPA-I-R4-GAD-2025-FARMER in the subject line to GAD-NOFO@epa.gov before the application deadline time and date and must include the following:
  - Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
  - Description of the issue
  - The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, the EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

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

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

## E. Intergovernmental Review

[Intergovernmental review](#) is applicable to this assistance listing when proposed Federal financial assistance involves land use planning or construction associated with demonstration projects.

If your proposal includes land use planning or construction, you will need to submit application information for Intergovernmental Review. Some states have adopted Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for coordinating the review.

Contact the [applicable grants office](#) for further instruction.

This requirement does not apply to American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes or tribal organizations.

## 6. Application Review Information

### A. Responsiveness Review

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

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

### B. Review Criteria

Criteria Name and Description	Points
<p><b>Project Design</b></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Describes the proposed project approach, rationale, and plans for project execution (30 points).</li> <li>B. Describes how the project meets <a href="#">GAD’s Statutory Authority</a> and <a href="#">EPA’s “Powering the Great American Comeback” initiative’s</a> Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American and, if applicable, Pillar 4: Make the United States the Artificial Intelligence Capital of the World (5 points).</li> </ul> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">Program Description</a> and Section 1 of the <a href="#">Project Workplan</a> in the Project Narrative Format.</p> <p>Letters of Support should be included for partners with substantial involvement and/or if project successes depend on partner involvement.</p>	<p><b>35</b></p>

<p><b>Innovative Technology</b></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the projects utilize new or expand existing innovative technologies (e.g. Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, real-time sensors, UAV/drones etc.) to enhance monitoring or management of nutrient pollution and/or erosion.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>
<p><b>Economic Benefits</b></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they explain how activities and/or innovations will lead to cost savings and economic benefits for farmers. Applications should clearly describe how the proposed activities and/or innovations will be evaluated alongside existing or commonly used practices to determine cost effectiveness. <i>Applications that specifically identify how their project could lead to economic benefits to farming communities will be scored more favorably.</i></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>
<p><b>Environmental Results</b></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the application demonstrates the anticipated results (outputs and outcomes), including but not limited to those identified in <a href="#">Section 3.A</a>. This evaluation will consider whether specific outputs and outcomes, including target numbers, are clearly described. <i>Points will be deducted if no quantitative targets are identified.</i></p> <p>Refer to Section 4 - <a href="#">Environmental Results</a> in the Project Narrative Format.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>
<p><b>Milestone Schedule</b></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they provide a clearly articulated milestone schedule for project activities, tasks, and deliverables. The table should include progress reporting to EPA and be organized by year and quarter. The link between the activities and achievement of identified outputs and outcomes should be clear.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>
<p><b>Past Performance and Programmatic Capability</b></p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 6 of the <a href="#">Project Workplan</a> in the Project Narrative Format,</li> <li>B. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 6 of the <a href="#">Project Workplan</a> in the Project Narrative Format 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 toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not,</li> <li>C. history of whether journal publications or author manuscripts associated with the journal publications, and the associated underlying scientific research data and</li> </ul>	<p><b>10</b></p>

<p>metadata, resulting from the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 6 of the <a href="#">Project Workplan</a> in the Project Narrative Format were made publicly accessible, and if not whether the applicant adequately explained why not, or the applicant explained why the requirement does not apply,</p> <p>D. organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and</p> <p>E. staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items A, B, and C of these criteria, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application, and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items A, B, and C above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p>	
<p><b>Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds</b></p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner <b>while preventing waste, fraud, and abuse.</b></p>	5
<p><b>Budget</b></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the budget articulates the <a href="#">reasonableness</a>, necessity, <a href="#">allowability</a>, and <a href="#">allocability</a> (of costs) for the level of work proposed and the expected benefits to be achieved.</p> <p>This section will be evaluated based on two items:</p> <p>A. Budget Table – This refers to a more detailed budget table than the mandatory SF-424A. If provided, this should be easy to understand and should link the expenses to the tasks and deliverables from the project narrative.</p> <p>B. Budget Narrative – This is used to provide a detailed description of costs not easily understandable in the budget table. If no budget table is provided to supplement the mandatory SF-424A, the narrative must include all details needed to evaluate the budget.</p> <p>Evaluation will consider the organizational overhead (indirect costs), direct costs and ability to control costs versus anticipated results.</p> <p>Refer to Section 8 of the <a href="#">Project Workplan</a>.</p> <p>Note: The budget should indicate which tasks can be scaled down or removed to reduce overall budget requests as the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions of proposed projects.</p>	20

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

Only eligible entities whose applications meet the threshold criteria in [Section 2](#) of this announcement will be evaluated. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative.** Each application will be rated using a point system. Applications will be evaluated based on a total of 140 possible points.

### **Evaluation of the Scientific Data Management Plan**

EPA will evaluate the merits of the SDMPs for those applications recommended for award. The SDMPs for those applications not recommended for award will not be reviewed. The SDMPs of all applications recommended for award will be evaluated to ensure they are appropriate and adequate (e.g., that they describe the types of scientific research data and metadata to be collected and/or generated under the proposed research award and include plans for providing long-term preservation of, and public access to, the scientific research data and metadata). SDMPs that indicate the proposed research will not result in the generation and/or collection of scientific research data will also be evaluated to ensure the proposed research will not result in the generation and/or collection of scientific research data and therefore not require a more comprehensive SDMP. Applicants may be contacted regarding their SDMP if additional information is needed or if revisions are required prior to award. If upon review of the SDMP, EPA identifies any issues with the plan, EPA will raise these issues to the applicant, so they may be addressed. Applicants with an unsatisfactory SDMP will not receive an award.

## **C. Review and Selection Process**

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in [Section 2](#). Only those applications which meet all the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by a review panel composed of federal agency staff and subject matter experts. Applications will be sorted by the primary focus area identified on the summary information page of the application. The secondary focus area identified may be used as needed to balance review teams. Applications may be further sorted by activity location. Review panels will rank the applications based on the criteria in [Section 6.B](#) and develop preliminary recommendations for funding to the Selection Official(s). A ranking list will be developed for each review team. Information pertaining to proposed recommendations may be shared with appropriate governmental departments or agencies before selections are made 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. Final funding decisions will be made by the Selection Official. In making the final funding decision, the Selection Official will consider the review panel rankings and recommendations and may also consider other evaluation factors described below.

### **(1) Other Evaluation Factors**

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

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

- compliance with Executive Orders (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-orders/>);
- any duplicate funding issues;
- the amount of the organization's unliquidated obligations on previous GAD grants;
- program priorities;
- funding availability; and/or

- appropriate balance 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 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.

**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 NOFO 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.

**Pre-Award Costs:** Recipients may incur otherwise eligible and allowable pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award at their own risk without prior approval from EPA's award official. Pre-award costs must comply with 2 CFR 200.458 and 2 CFR 1500.9. If EPA determines that the requested pre-award costs comply with the relevant authorities, and that the costs are justified as allocable to the project, then these costs may be included as allowable expenditures at the time that the assistance award document is prepared. However, if for any reason EPA does not fund the application or the amount of the award is less than the applicant anticipated, then EPA is under no obligation to reimburse the applicant for these costs incurred. Thus, applicants incur pre-award costs at their own risk. Costs incurred more than 90 days prior to award require the approval of EPA Region 4's Grant Official.

## D. Risk Review

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

## 7. Award Notices

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

## 8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

### A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

### B. Reporting

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

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

### C. Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting

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

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

## 9. Other Information

### A. Additional Provisions for Applicants

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

#### (1) Example of Demonstration Projects

- Algal growth and aquatic plant production and harvesting (Using nutrient in waterways)
- Strategic Wetland restoration to improve nutrient removal
- Development of innovative materials or membranes that help remove/recapture excess nutrients
- Innovative nutrient removal from water retention ponds
- Habitat creation, restoration
- Reuse systems that promote water conservation and/or nutrient recapture

## (2) Eligible Hydrologic Unit Codes

The HUC boundary can be viewed using the map at the NOFO link on <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofamerica>.

*Table 9.1 Eligible Area by HUC*

HUC2	Name
03*	South Atlantic-Gulf Region*
05	Ohio Region
06	Tennessee Region
07	Upper Mississippi Region
08	Lower Mississippi Region
10**	Missouri Region**
11	Arkansas-White-Red Region
12	Texas-Gulf Region
13**	Rio Grande Region**

\*portions that flow to the Gulf of America – see table 9.2

\*\*portions within the United States

*Table 9.2 Eligible portions of HUC 03 South Atlantic-Gulf Region*

HUC4	Name
0309*	Southern Florida*
0310	Peace-Tampa Bay
0311	Suwannee
0312	Ochlockonee
0313	Apalachicola
0314	Choctawhatchee-Escambia
0315	Alabama
0316	Mobile-Tombigbee
0317	Pascagoula
0318	Pearl

\*portions that flow to the Gulf of America - see table 9.3

*Table 9.3 Eligible portions of HUC 0309 Southern Florida*

HUC8	Name
3090203	Florida Bay-Florida Keys
3090202	Everglades
3090103	Western Okeechobee Inflow
3090201	Lake Okeechobee
3090101	Kissimmee
3090102	Northern Okeechobee Inflow
3090204	Big Cypress Swamp
3090205	Caloosahatchee

