OVERVIEW

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

TITLE: Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2022 Request for Applications for: Chesapeake Bay Program Goal Implementation Teams Support, Scientific Community Support, and Summer Student Program Management

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications (RFA)

RFA NUMBER: EPA-R3-CBP-22-02

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 66.466

IMPORTANT DATES

April 15, 2022	Issuance of RFA
May 31, 2022	Application Submission Deadline (see Section IV for more information)
June 28, 2022	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
July 08, 2022	Approximate date for applicant to submit revised federal cooperative agreement application
August 12, 2022	Approximate date of award

EPA will consider all eligible applications that are submitted via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm ET on **May 31, 2022** and consider any applications submitted after the due date as ineligible. EPA will only accept applications submitted via Grants.gov except in limited circumstances where applicants have no or very limited Internet access (see section IV.).

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.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

1. About the Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, CBP is responsible for supporting the Executive Council through a number of actions, including the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

The CBP is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. Today, the CBP partners include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; and EPA, representing the federal government.

2. 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Executive Order 13508

In support of, and in augmentation to, the historic 2010 Chesapeake TMDL, on June 16, 2014, the Chesapeake Executive Council, CBP's governing body, signed a new voluntary *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* that will guide the CBP partnership's work into the future. For the first time, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia signed the agreement as full CBP partners in the overall effort. The agreement is one of the most comprehensive restoration plans developed for the Chesapeake region, providing greater transparency and accountability of all CBP partners. With 10 interrelated goals and 31 outcomes, this watershed-wide accord advances the restoration, conservation, and protection of all the lands and waters within the 64,000-square-mile watershed by addressing climate change, promoting sound land use, and enhancing the protection and restoration the Chesapeake Bay's living resources, water quality, and vital habitats.

Executive Order (EO) 13508, issued in May 2009, called for a new strategy and a "new era of shared federal leadership" for restoring and protecting the Chesapeake Bay. When it was issued, the EO strategy built upon existing CBP goals and identified a set of goals and outcome measures. Since that time, federal and CBP jurisdictional partners worked collaboratively to better align the EO and CBP partnership's goals, the results of which are reflected in the new *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

This cooperative agreement will help fulfill the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* commitments of Executive Order (EO) 13508 by "achieving the most essential priorities for a healthy Chesapeake ecosystem: Restore Clean Water, Recover Habitats" as well as the "supporting strategies to Respond to Climate Change, and Strengthen Science".

3. Background on Partnership Structure

The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the **Chesapeake Executive Council** (Executive Council), which, through its leadership, establishes the policy direction for the

restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and exerts its leadership to rally public support for the Bay effort and signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay restoration. The Executive Council is established by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act. To ensure implementation of the Executive Council's Chesapeake Bay Agreements, the CBP partnership has several committees, teams, workgroups comprised of participating partners. The structure and governance of the program will change and evolve over time as a result of the CBP's application of adaptive management, but the current organization includes the following:

The **Principals' Staff Committee** (PSC) acts as the senior policy advisors to the Executive Council, accepting items for their consideration and approval and setting agendas for Executive Council meetings. The PSC translates the restoration vision by setting policy and implementing actions on behalf of the Executive Council. The PSC also provides policy and program direction to the Management Board.

The **Management Board** provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the CBP. It directs and coordinates all of the goal teams and workgroups under it.

The **Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee** (STAC**)** provides scientific and technical guidance to the Chesapeake Bay Program on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. Since its creation in December 1984, STAC has worked to enhance scientific communication and outreach throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed and beyond.

The CBP partnership also includes two other advisory committees: the Citizens' Advisory Committee and the Local Government Advisory Committee. Both of these committees are supported under different funding mechanisms.

The six **Goal Implementation Teams (**GITs**)**, listed below, along with the **Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting** (STAR) team, include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Thus, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and others become active members of the broad restoration partnership. The Management Board can also convene short-term action teams as needed by the CBP partnership to focus on particular issues that are not currently under the purview of the GITs.

The **Sustainable Fisheries GIT** draws together a diverse group of managers and scientists to improve management and recovery of oysters, blue crab, menhaden, striped bass, and alosines. It focuses on advancing ecosystem-based fisheries management by using science to make informed fishery management decisions that cross state boundaries.

The **Habitat GIT** seeks to facilitate the implementation of projects that restore and enhance a network of land and water habitats to support priority species and to afford other public benefits, including water quality, recreational uses, and scenic value across the watershed by coordinating the efforts of CBP partners.

The charge of the **Water Quality GIT** is to evaluate, focus, and accelerate the implementation of practices, policies, and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to conditions that support living resources and protect human health.

The goal of the **Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT** is to maintain local watersheds at optimal health across a range of landscape contexts.

The charge of the **Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship GIT** is to increase citizen action, support environmental education for all ages, and assist citizens, communities, and local governments in undertaking initiatives to conserve treasured landscapes.

The charge of the **Enhancing Partnering, Leadership and Management GIT** is to continually improve the leadership and management of the CBP partnership and assist Bay stakeholders in building their capacity to become environmental leaders in their communities.

The **STAR Team** works to increase collaboration among science providers to provide monitoring, modeling, and analysis needed to update, explain, and communicate ecosystem condition and change to support the Chesapeake Bay Program's GITs.

The **Communications Workgroup** provides support for the communication needs of the CBP partners by spurring public action through consistent messaging, expanded media coverage, use of multimedia and online tools, comprehensive branding and promotion, outreach to stakeholders, and coordinated internal and external communications.

Obtaining Additional Information

For additional background information on the CBP achievements and commitments, see the CBP Partnership's website located at http://www.chesapeakebay.net/

B. Scope of Work

This RFA is seeking cost-effective applications from eligible applicants to provide the CBP's non-federal partners with administrative and technical staff support to the CBP committees, GITs, and workgroups as they work to restore the Chesapeake Bay and meet the goals and commitments contained in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

EPA seeks to support up to three recipients with: 1) The ability to create and implement a professional development program to build the capacity of environmental professionals (primarily those just entering the field) to work in a consensus-building committee structure such as the CBP partnership; and/or 2) Experience in enhancing multi-partner, consensus-based environmental decision-making in the Chesapeake Bay watershed through the synthesis and application of scientific understanding of the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding watershed ecosystems; and/or 3) The ability to develop a summer program that supports students interested in leadership positions in careers in environmental protection and restoration. Consistent with the EPA's environmental justice principles, see Section I.E., below, consideration should be given to supporting students from underrepresented populations. A single organization with experience in

all three areas may apply for all three activities but must submit a separate application for each Activity, with each application addressing a single Activity.

While the CBP partnership is comprised of federal and non-federal organizations, any activities funded under this RFA are primarily for the support of the non-federal partners. The recipients of the cooperative agreements awarded under this RFA may work directly with federal agencies, but the nature of the work will result only in direct, significant benefits to the non-federal agencies, partners, and the general public. Any indirect and incidental benefits to EPA are not the purpose of this RFA. Applications should include administrative, technical, and coordination support to the non-federal partners and the appropriate CBP technical workgroups for carrying out the stated missions of these committees, teams, and workgroups within the larger CBP management structure.

The total estimated funding under this solicitation is approximately $8,800,000 overall, with an estimated $1,600,000 available for the first year and $1,800,000 each additional year thereafter. The estimated funding for Activity 1 is $1,145,000 for the first year and $1,295,000 each additional year; the estimated funding for Activity 2 is $424,000 for the first year and $474,000 each additional year; and the estimated funding for Activity 3 is approximately $31,000 per year. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

If your organization has an interest in and has the skills to accomplish one or multiple activities, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit an application for each Activity you are interested in. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activities are multi-year projects (up to five years), and the application should have a work plan and budget for the first year and a projected work plan and estimated budget detail for each of the subsequent five years.

Activity 1: Professional Development Program that Provides Chesapeake Bay Program Committee Staff and Coordination Support
Estimated Funding: $1,145,000 for year 1 ($1,145,000 to $1,295,000 for each year thereafter) plus EPA In-kind funding.

This Activity supports the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership in two ways: It provides administrative and technical staffing support for the CBP partnership's technical, management, and policy committees, GITs, and workgroups; and it increases the capacity, diversity, and development of the state, local, and NGO workforce committed to the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. This work will support CBP partnership's efforts to carry out the work needed to achieve the 10 goals and 31 underlying outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and the 25 management strategies and Logic & Action Plans developed to implement the outcomes. This Activity will include approximately 10-14 staff positions plus one water quality goal team coordination support position, plus the necessary program management position(s).

Professional Development Program – Staffing Support

The following are examples of the types of tasks that may be performed to carry out Activity 1 – Professional Development Program – Staffing Support. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support.

- Provide support to the CBP organization (committees, goal implementation teams, workgroups, action teams, etc.) in its effort to meet the goals outlined in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and the supporting Management Strategies by:

    - Scheduling, organizing, and developing agendas for meetings, conference calls, and webinars;

    - Producing minutes/summaries of meetings, conference call, and webinars;

    - Following through on action items and decisions agreed to during meetings, conference call, and webinars;

    - Creating content for and maintaining web pages on the CBP partnership's suite of websites including chesapeakebay.net and chesapeakeprogress.com.

    - Drafting, writing, preparing, and editing reports, documents, presentations, and other narrative and visual forms of communications;

    - Conducting special projects as assigned, such as analyzing data, producing GIS maps, developing reports, running model scenarios, etc; and

    - Updating and preparing documents to support the CBP's Strategy Review System.

- Provide professional development for the staff hired by grantee to carry out this Activity through a variety of group trainings and educational experiences, individual professional experiences, volunteer activities, and independent projects, all of which allow the staffers to support the mission of the CBP partnership efficiently and effectively.

- Provide staffing support that considers issues of diversity, equity and inclusion; and conduct outreach and recruitment from institutions and organizations associated with diverse and underrepresented populations.

- Work in coordination with Goal Teams and Workgroups to develop position announcements for each staff position and disseminate widely through the partnerships' network of academic institutions and other appropriate avenues.

- Conduct interviews for each staff position.

Historically, these staff positions have been filled by entry-level professionals with environmental, science, and/or government policy backgrounds; however, there may be circumstances where more experienced support is needed. Staff should have:

- Strong written and oral communication skills, proficiency with computer software such as Microsoft Office (e.g. Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) and the ability to work with social networks and remote meeting technologies.
- The ability to work with a variety of individuals, interests, and levels of government.
- The ability to work in a fast-paced environment on multiple priorities.
- The capacity to demonstrate that their recruitment practices encourage diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.

In addition to the general skills and knowledge needed for all positions, there are specific areas of emphasis for the various committees, teams, and workgroups. Applicants should describe how they would provide support for these different groups given their unique areas of focus. For more information about the number of workgroups, meeting schedules, missions, and membership of each, refer to http://www.chesapeakebay.net/about. Staffing support in total should cover a diverse set of experiences and knowledge that could include:

- Solid meeting management techniques and diplomacy skills.
- An understanding of how a multi-party governmental partnership effectively makes decisions and sets and achieves goals through collaborative processes is key as is a strong emphasis on summarization, documentation, and record-keeping of collaborative decisions and follow-up actions.
- An understanding of advanced mathematical analysis and modeling skills, GIS skills, and knowledge of local planning.
- A strong science background and understanding of large complex aquatic and terrestrial habitats.
- An understanding of water quality policy and/or the law of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and the relationship between land use and water quality, particularly as they relate to toxics, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment reduction through a variety of pollutant source sectors.
- An understanding of local land use planning and synthesis skills and tools (e.g. using GIS software).
- An understanding of methods and strategies to increase citizen action, support environmental education for all ages, and assist citizens, communities and local governments in conserving treasured landscapes.
- An ability to collaborate with watershed organizations and citizens to solve local environmental issues and develop and deliver environmental education programming.
- A proficiency with data management and analysis, including use of spreadsheets, databases, and graphics software to present results of data analyses; familiarity with ecological and environmental monitoring programs and analyses.
- A proficiency with writing, editing, communication and computer skills, and writing Web content.
- An ability to advance diversity and environmental justice issues and promote the meaningful involvement, treatment, and inclusiveness of all people in the implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

- A knowledge of climate resiliency and likely impacts of changing climatic and sea level conditions on the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, including a knowledge of the effectiveness of restoration and protection policies, programs, and projects; and a knowledge of restoration and protection projects that enhance the resiliency of the Bay and aquatic life.

Water Quality Goal Team Coordination Support

The Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) evaluates and accelerates the implementation of practices, policies, and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to conditions that support living resources and protect human health. The Team reports to the Management Board and PSC. Functions include:

- Providing a forum for discussion, exchange of information, and evaluation among federal, state, and local agencies, river basin commissions, industry groups, universities, and other interested parties on water quality goals, data, modeling, authorities, and restoration efforts.

- Evaluating and promoting strategies to reduce nutrient, sediment, and chemical contaminant loads from municipal, industrial, and onsite wastewater; agricultural lands and animal operations; urban and suburban stormwater; forested lands; tidal and in-stream sediment; and air emissions.

- Promoting consistent, uniform, and transparent processes to model, track, report, and verify water quality restoration efforts.

- Identifying, defining, quantifying, and incorporating pollutant reduction and conservation practices into the Chesapeake Bay Program decision support system.

- Providing technical expertise and leadership to support the development, implementation, and tracking of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, Watershed Implementation Plans, and two-year milestones that support long-term Bay restoration goals.

- Collaborating on water quality science, research, and management needs to maximize the synergy between STAC and the WQ Goal Implementation Team for increased efficiency and communication between the two groups.

The following are examples of the types of tasks that may be performed to carry out Activity 1 – WQGIT – Coordination Support. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support.

- Coordinate activities of the WQGIT related to the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. Provide direct support with regard to planning and facilitating activities, tracking performance, and other duties related to conducting the day-to-day business of the Goal Team and associated workgroups, including development of workplans, generation of meeting materials and summaries, and ensuring that Web pages are up to date.

- Collaborate on water quality science, research, and management needs to maximize the synergy between STAC and the WQGIT for increased efficiency and communication between the two groups.

- Represent Water Quality GIT interests to the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC), Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), STAR, other CBP groups, and external organizations.

- Support the WQGIT Chair in preparation of meeting materials and agendas. Support WQGIT Chair in preparing to represent interests at the Management Board, PSC, and other groups.

- Provide oversight to staffers assigned to the WQGIT.

- Coordinate implementation and Strategy Review System reviews of the water quality related outcomes.

- Provide project coordination for the CBP partnership's BMP expert panels as well as the associated BMP guides and supporting documentation.

In addition to the general coordination skills and knowledge needed for this position, there are specific areas of emphasis for the WQGIT Coordination position. Applicants should describe how they would provide support for this Goal Team given their unique areas of focus. Coordination support should include a diverse set of experience and knowledge that could include:

- Research synthesis, data analysis, water quality modeling, GIS usage and data visualization, agricultural management, urban stormwater management, and/or wastewater management.

Activity 2: Chesapeake Bay Program Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee Estimated Funding: $424,000 for year 1 ($424,000 to $474,000 for each year thereafter) plus EPA In-kind funding.

The CBP partnership's STAC provides scientific and technical guidance to the CBP partnership on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and to enhance the ability of the CBP partnership to make scientifically sound decisions.

STAC continues to be an integral component of the CBP partnership's collaborative decision-making management structure. The 38-member advisory committee includes internationally acclaimed representatives affiliated with major universities and research institutions in the Chesapeake Bay watershed who were appointed by governors, federal agencies, and members of the scientific and technical community.

STAC focuses the Chesapeake Bay watershed and national scientific and technical communities' expertise towards the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed by:

- Setting priorities on scientific and technical issues of direct relevance to resource management decision-making directed toward Bay and watershed restoration and protection;

- Evaluating CBP partnership issues and programs from the perspective of scientific integrity;

- Providing guidance on scientific research and technical products through independent scientific peer reviews;

- Identifying emerging scientific and technical issues and challenges to achieving Bay and watershed restoration and protection goals before they become mainstream topics of management focus;

- Conducting workshops, evaluations, and independent scientific peer reviews to address specific issues of interest to restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed; and

- Synthesizing, evaluating, disseminating, and communicating scientific information of direct relevance to restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

The following are examples of the types of tasks that may be performed to carry out Activity 2. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support.

- Schedule STAC's quarterly two-day meetings and provide administrative and logistical support for same. This support may include developing agendas, scheduling speakers and presenters, ensuring delivery of advance briefing and presentation materials, drafting summaries, and posting all relevant meeting materials on the STAC website in a timely manner. The successful applicant will provide this support by identifying emerging issues, assessing performance of CBP activities, and addressing issues brought to the committee by various members of the CBP partnership's management structure.

- Directly assist STAC in its efforts to identify, prioritize, and synthesize relevant findings and evaluate possible management implications of emerging scientific and technical issues facing the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its surrounding watershed.

- Provide a full range of administrative and logistical support to STAC in scheduling and conducting its sponsored technical workshops, scientific and technical conferences, workgroups, task forces, evaluations, and independent scientific peer reviews. This includes assisting in the development, review, and publication of proceedings of each of these forums.

- Support the continued annual implementation of the established STAC Workshops' protocol through all stages of workshop development and implementation. The support may include soliciting workshop requests and receipt of workshop proposals, workshop planning and organizational support, and receipt of workshop findings and recommendations.

- Support STAC's preparation of scientific and technical reports, papers, and synthesize scientific literature on management-relevant topics.

- Support STAC's convening of rapid-response review teams—scheduling small meetings or assembling expert panels to respond to CBP partnership management requests for scientific review/technical synthesis/evaluation.

- Support STAC members in providing direct assistance to individual GITs, STAR, and workgroups on an as-requested/as-needed basis.

- Help organize and provide administrative oversight and logistical support requested by the CBP partnership regarding independent, scientific peer reviews of reports, models, and monitoring programs following established STAC-peer-review procedures.

- Assist in the identification and dissemination of scientific research priorities for supporting implementation of the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and the supporting management strategies and work plans.

- Support the active participation of STAC members in meetings of the CBP's Executive Council, PSC, Management Board, CAC, LGAC, GITs, STAR, and workgroups.

- On behalf of STAC, interact directly and frequently and coordinate routinely with the chairs and coordinators of CAC, LGAC, PSC, Management Board, GITs, and STAR to stay abreast of the management-relevant emerging-scientific and -technical issues and needs.

- Support efforts by STAC to help the CBP partnership to effectively carry out adaptive management as called for in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* by:
    - Working to constantly improve the effectiveness of the management programs by helping to design, and evaluate the results of, a process for continually reducing the uncertainty in management strategies;
    - Implementing the CBP partnership's decision framework, including developing detailed predictions of expected future system behavior and responses to management actions based on current scientific understanding of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its watershed; and
    - Ensuring the continued operation of well-designed monitoring programs that will enable the CBP partnership's constant assessment of the relative effectiveness of the collective set of management actions taken and the use of that information in adaptive management.

- Support STAC in ensuring the continued adherence to the CBP/STAC Communication Protocol and maintain a public record of the results of STAC-sponsored workshops, conferences, evaluations, peer reviews, and corresponding CBP responses to the resultant findings and recommendations.

- Actively maintain and routinely update the STAC website to keep STAC members, CBP partners, and other website users informed about the full array of past, present, and planned STAC activities, including on-going projects, meetings, workshops, reviews, evaluations, and publications as well as STAC's findings and recommendations reported to the CBP partnership.

- Provide staffing support that considers issues of diversity, equity and inclusion; and conduct outreach and recruitment from institutions and organizations associated with diverse and underrepresented populations.

Activity 3: Coordination of Summer Program that Supports Students Interested in Careers in Environmental Protection and Restoration, with Consideration for Supporting Students from Underrepresented Populations.
Estimated Funding: $31,000 per year for up to five years plus EPA In-kind funding.

The CBP is committed to providing professional experiences to college students from populations that have been historically excluded from the environmental field and are underrepresented in environmental research and management professions. The students support the CBP by assisting with coordination and administrative activities as well as specific tasks assigned by their supervisor, such as research projects, literature reviews, report development and editing, and data analysis.

These professional opportunities provide students, including those from underrepresented communities, with a unique opportunity to contribute to large-scale, long-term natural resource management and policy development critical to understanding new ways to manage Chesapeake Bay living resources most effectively and efficiently across the Chesapeake Bay watershed; ultimately facilitating pathways to successful careers in environmental research, restoration, and/or management.

The following are examples of the types of tasks that may be performed to carry out Activity 3. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support.

- Identify highly competent undergraduate students for 8-12 weeks during the summer to support the administrative and technical needs of the CBP, encouraging university students from groups traditionally underrepresented in the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics to pursue environmentally oriented research and/or management careers in the academic, public, and private sectors.
- Develop position announcements for each summer student position and disseminate widely through the partnerships network of academic institutions and other appropriate means, coordinating with CBP leadership.

- Conduct interviews for each summer student position.
- Provide professional development to the students through activities such as group trainings and educational experiences, individual professional experiences, volunteer activities, and by developing and implementing independent projects, all of which allow the staffers to support the mission of the CBP partnership efficiently and effectively.
- Coordinate opportunities for the students to present a summary of their work to CBP staff before their internship ends.
- Provide staffing support that considers issues of diversity, equity and inclusion; and conduct outreach and recruitment from institutions and organizations associated with diverse and underrepresented populations.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to 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, accessible at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements).

1. Linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan

The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan. Awards made under this solicitation will support *Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities*, *Objective 5.2 Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds* of the Strategic Plan.

EPA Order 5700.7A1 also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under 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.

2. Outputs

The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of potential outputs under the Scope of Work of this announcement may include but are not limited to the following:

Activity 1:

- Continual enhancement of up-to-date membership, materials, and information on Goal Implementation Team pages on the CBP website and on ChesapeakeDecisions.
- Continual enhancement of conference calls, webinars, virtual and hybrid meeting platforms to promote more efficient use of the CBP partnership members' time in conducting the work of the partnership while maintaining the collaborative decision-making process.

Activity 2:

- Quarterly STAC meetings scheduled that have the agenda developed and advance briefing materials and presentations posted on-line on the STAC web site with link to CBP web site calendar (http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar) within a week of each meeting/conference call.
- Increased number of STAC-sponsored workshop and conference **proceedings** published within six months of the original date of the workshop/conference.
- Increased number of STAC-sponsored, independent scientific peer review **reports** published within two months of the original date of the conclusion of the peer review panel.
- Increased number of management agency challenges assumed and addressed by STAC through a combination of meetings, workshops, reviews, and/or special teams.

Activity 3:

- Increased number of students that assist the CBP through coordination and administrative activities as well as specific tasks assigned by their supervisor, such as research projects, literature reviews, report development and editing, and data analysis.
- Increased number of professional development activities for the students, including group trainings and educational experiences, individual professional experiences, and volunteer activities.

Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs for all activities, as specified in Section VI.C., Reporting, of this announcement.

3. Outcomes

The term "outcome" means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of potential outcomes under the Scope of Work of this announcement may include but are not limited to the following:

Activity 1:

- Increased ability by the CBP partnership to make collaborative decisions needed to carry out the work required to meeting the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

Activity 2:

- Increased public acceptance of the necessary actions to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed due to higher levels of confidence in the scientific basis of those needed restoration and protection actions.

Activity 3:

- Increased pathways for successful careers in environmental research, restoration, and/or management for college students, including those from populations that have been

historically excluded from the environmental field and are underrepresented in environmental research and management professions.

D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

This grant is made pursuant to CWA Section 117(d), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d), which authorizes EPA to issue grants and cooperative agreements for the purposes of protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. This project is subject to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 1500).

E. Environmental Justice Considerations

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

Applicants for the cooperative agreement "Chesapeake Bay Program Goal Implementation Teams Support, Scientific Community Support and Summer Internship Program Management" should 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.

F. Minority Serving Institutions:

EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces. At the same time, EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation by including members of communities which may have not previously participated in such dialogues to participate in EPA programs. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including minority serving institutions (MSIs), to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered MSIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061). A list of these schools can be found at Historically Black Colleges and Universities at: https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/one-hundred-and-five-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/;

2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities at https://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/tribes-tcus/tribal-colleges-and-universities/;

3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at Hispanic-Serving Institutions at https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis/;

4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions and this associated link, and

5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at Predominately Black Institutions and this associated link, https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1wlIi3j7gtlNq_w-0NKAb2bF2VmY&ie=UTF&msa=0&ll=37.35160769312532%2C-96.17229800000001&z=4.

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

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

CBPO plans to award up to three cooperative agreements under this RFA, one for each Activity listed in Section I. The total estimated funding under this solicitation is approximately $8,800,000 overall, with an estimated $1,600,000 available for the first year and $1,800,000 each additional year thereafter. The estimated funding for Activity 1 is $1,145,000 for the first year and $1,295,000 each additional year; the estimated funding for Activity 2 is $424,000 for the first year and $474,000 each additional year; and the estimated funding for Activity 3 is approximately $31,000 per year. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

B. Award Type

EPA has determined that a cooperative agreement is the appropriate funding vehicle for this project. Cooperative agreements are used under circumstances where substantial involvement is anticipated between EPA and the recipient during performance of the Activity. 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 C.F.R. 200.317 and 2 C.F.R. 200.318, as appropriate; review of proposed procurements; review of 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.
For this project, federal involvement would typically be in the form of participation with other CBP partners and stakeholders in an advisory capacity to the grantee. The participation is expected to include involvement through various CBP GITs and related committees and workgroups (on which EPA also participates to ensure that all the recommendations for technical work support the CBP partners). All work conducted is to support the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

C. Partial Funding

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a project, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice the applicant or affect the basis upon which the application or portion thereof was evaluated and selected for award and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is five years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFA is **August 12, 2022**.

E. 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 of EPA's award official. Pre-award costs must comply with 2 C.F.R. 200.458 and 2 C.F.R. 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 3's grant official.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

A. Eligible Applicants

Under section 117(d), funds are available for technical and general assistance grants to nonprofit organizations, State, tribal (federally recognized) and local governments, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies; and under section 117(g)(2), funds are available for technical assistance and assistance grants under the Small Watershed Grants Program to local governments and nonprofit organizations and individuals in the Chesapeake Bay region. For certain competitive funding opportunities under this assistance listing, the Agency may limit eligibility to compete to a number or subset of eligible applicants consistent with the Agency's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy. Nonprofit organizations, State, tribal (federally-recognized) and local governments, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies are eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA. For-profit organizations are not eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA.

B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

Pursuant to CWA 117(d)(2)(A), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d)(2)(A), the agency shall determine the cost-share requirements for awards. The Assistance Listing Number, 66.466, states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost-share ranging from five percent to 50 percent of eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For this RFA, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of five percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

Cost-share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Involvement from foundations, watershed groups, private sector, eligible governmental, as well as non-conventional partners can help with the match. The match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to the match provisions in grant regulations. Applications that do not demonstrate how the five percent match will be met will be rejected.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Only applications from eligible entities (see Section III.A above) that meet the following threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the criteria in Section V.B. Applicants must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified in writing within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. **Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement, or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the project narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.**

2. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.

   Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov (see Section VII, Agency Contact) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application(s) not being reviewed.

3. Applications must be for projects linked to the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.

4. For an application to be considered eligible for funding, project-related work included in the application must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia.

5. Applications must show how they will meet the five percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B.

6. Applications requesting funding for more than the maximum available funding range for the activity in which the applicant is applying will be rejected.

7. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the entire application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

8. Applicants must address one and only one Activity described in Section I.B. to be considered eligible. A single organization with experience in all three areas may apply for all three activities but must submit a separate application for each Activity, with each application addressing a single Activity. Applications that address more than one Activity, or no Activity, will be considered ineligible.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

A. How to Obtain an Application Package

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from the application package associated with this opportunity on Grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Each application will be evaluated using the criteria referenced in Section V.B. of this announcement. You must submit all the documents listed below including single-spaced project narrative of up to 15 pages in length by the date and time specified in Section IV.C below excess pages will not review. The format for the project narrative is contained in Appendix A of this RFA.
The application package **must** include all the following materials:

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. **Narrative Proposal** (Project Narrative Attachment Form) – The project narrative should be prepared as described in Appendix A of the announcement.
6. **Budget Narrative Attachment Form** – The budget narrative should include a spreadsheet that shows each year's cost for the salaries, fringe benefits, total salaries/wages, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual expenses, other cost, and indirect cost. Please refer to EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment's budget detail guidance and IDC guidance located at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02 and https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02, respectively.
7. **Other Attachment Form** – The applicant's **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** should be included, as applicable.

Requirements for Project Narrative — See Appendix A
All application review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the project narrative. The project narrative shall not exceed **15** pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10 and the application must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper. Note that the **15** pages include all supporting materials, including resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support. The 15-page limit does not include documentation of non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, the SF-424, SF-424A, budget detail, Key Contacts Form and 4700-4 form. If you submit more than 15 pages for the project narrative, the additional pages will be discarded and will not be reviewed. See Appendix A for additional instructions.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Please review the Intergovernmental Review clause included as part of the EPA Solicitation Clauses. This program MAY be subject to Executive Order 12372--Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. See this link for information and instructions: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-region-3-grants-and-audit-management-branch-intergovernmental-review-process-and-single. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your application is selected for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority
Grantees applying for CBPO assistance agreements must adhere to the requirements for "Administrative Costs" under the Section 117 (d)(4) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award (annual grant award = federal share plus cost-share). **Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet** is provided as an example of a method to calculate the 10-percent limitation. You are not required to submit Appendix B with your application.

Allowable Costs

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E. In accordance with applicable law, regulation, and policy, any recipient of funding must agree to comply with restrictions on using assistance funds for unauthorized lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts). See e.g. 2 CFR 200.450. Funds generally cannot be used to pay for travel by federal agency staff. Proposed project activities must also comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. The applicant must also review the solicitation for any other programmatic funding restrictions applicable to this program. If awarded funding, the recipient must refer to the terms and conditions of its award for other funding restrictions applicable to its award. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure compliance with these requirements. In addition, please see 2 CFR 200 for information on preaward costs.

E. Submission Instructions

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

Applicants must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined here. Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with submissions with respect to this opportunity only are addressed in section 3. Technical Issues with Submission below.

2. Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through Grants.gov, go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then go to the "Get Registered" link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) 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 UEI assignment is FREE.

Existing and new SAM.gov registrants are also assigned a free SAM-issued Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Applicants must use their UEI, not their DUNS number, when filling out forms in the package for this funding opportunity. Please see RAIN-2021-G01 for information about EPA's implementation of the Government-wide transition from DUNS to UEI.

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

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

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to Grants.gov and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3-CBP-22-02 or the Assistance Listing number that applies to the announcement, 66.466, in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

Please Note: All applications must now be submitted through Grants.gov using the “Workspace” feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page.

Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **May 31, 2022 at 11:59 PM ET**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

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

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

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 organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational UEI number must be included on the SF-424. You may visiting their website at Unique Entity Identifier.
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. **Narrative Proposal** (Project Narrative Attachment Form) – The project narrative should be prepared as described in Appendix A of the announcement.
6. **Budget Narrative Attachment Form** – The budget narrative should include a spreadsheet that shows each year's cost for the salaries, fringe benefits, total salaries/wages, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual expenses, other cost, and indirect cost. Please refer to EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment's budget detail guidance and IDC guidance located at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02 and https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02, respectively.
7. **Other Attachment Form** – The applicant's **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** should be included, as applicable.

3. Technical Issues with Submission

a. 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.

b. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the "submit" button of the application package. Your Internet browser will

launch, and a sign-in page will appear. **Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.** The 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.

c. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to Grants.gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to James Hargett with the FON in the subject line. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ 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.

If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from Grants.gov.

d. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, and you have already attempted to resolve the issue by contacting Grants.gov, send an email message to hargett.james@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.

e. 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 and it is too late to reapply, promptly send an email to James Hargett with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

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

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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

A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews applications for threshold eligibility purposes as described in Section III, CBPO will conduct a merit evaluation of each eligible application. Reviews will be performed by a team of professionals from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. All reviewers will sign a conflict-of-interest statement indicating they have no conflict of interest.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

Criteria	Points
1. Organizational Capability, Scope, and Approach: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on: a. How well it demonstrates that the applicant has the organizational skill and experience to conduct the proposed Activity under Section I.B. (**15 points**) b. The extent and quality to which it demonstrates the ability of the organization to timely and successfully achieve the relevant Activity to support the CBP partners as described in Section I.B., regardless of whether the application encompasses one of the examples provided or puts forth an alternative approach that achieves the goal of the relevant Activity. **(15 points)**	30
2. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, considering the applicant's: a. Past performance in successfully completing and managing assistance agreements identified in their project narrative. Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements (but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements). (**5 points**). b. History of meeting the reporting requirements under assistance agreements identified in their project narrative, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable, final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not; **(5 points)**	30

c. Programmatic experience within the organization and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project; and **(5 points)** d. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff skills and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. **(15 points)** Note: In evaluating applicants under items a. and b. of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items a. and b. 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.	
3. Environmental Justice: As noted in the discussion of Environmental Justice Considerations, Section I.E., above, applications will be evaluated based on: how the project benefits underserved communities including those that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community and; the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities, especially local residents in these communities, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project. Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens and/or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect or have affected the underserved communities described in this solicitation. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions. Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include: differential proximity and exposure to adverse environmental hazards; greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to causes such as age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or limited access to quality nutrition); unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (for example, subsistence fishing or farming); cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes (due to causes such as lack of or ineffective language access programs, lack of programs to make processes accessible to persons with disabilities, inability to access traditional	10

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. **(10 points)**	
4. **Cost-effectiveness:** Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate each application based on the degree of cost-effectiveness, considering the following factors: organizational overhead, budget breakdown, and ability to control costs for the relevant Activity listed in Section I. (**10 points**)	10
5. **Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public:** Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application includes an adequate plan to gather information and lessons learned from the project and transfer that documentation, information, data, results, and recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders across the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner. (**5 points**)	5
6. **Innovation and Modernization of Methods Over Time:** Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the extent and quality of the application's description of innovation to deliver results by means of concepts, approaches, methods, or combinations of them and the reviewers will evaluate the application based on the extent to which it addresses the development of recommendations for changes to the existing CBP partnership communication platforms and practices, which will further improve the effectiveness of efforts to raise public awareness and involvement across the diversity of stakeholder communities within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. (**5 points**)	5
7. **Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds:** Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (**5 points**)	5
8. **Environmental Results:** Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the environmental outputs and outcomes identified in Section I.C of the RFA. **(5 points)**.	5

C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in Section V.B. above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked applications for each Activity to the director or deputy director of CBPO for final selections. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider programmatic goals and priorities, including those described in the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* at https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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

A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that the applicant will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around **June 28, 2022** either via email or U.S. Postal Service. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Region 3 grants office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant 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 an EPA grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided either via email or U.S. Postal Service.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application package. A federal project officer provides assistance in the application process and negotiates a work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

If your application is selected for funding, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/

Incurred Costs
Funding eligibility ends on the date specified in the award. The time expended, and costs incurred in either the development of the application or the final assistance application, or in any subsequent discussions or negotiations prior to the award, are neither reimbursable nor recognizable as part of the recipient's cost share.

Allowable Costs
EPA project officers and grant specialists have been provided guidance on determining the allowability and reasonableness of certain cost items under assistance agreements. The guidance indicates that the use of EPA grant funds for evening banquets, evening receptions or for light refreshments and meals at meetings, conferences, training workshops, and outreach activities (events) must be justified by the assistance recipient, identified in the budget detail, must be allowable under the OMB Cost Principles, and approved by the EPA Award Official. Further, EPA will not approve the use of grant funds for any portion of an event where alcohol is served, purchased, or otherwise available even if grant funds are not used to purchase the alcohol.

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Section 1500.11, projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

The QMP must document quality assurance policies and practices that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet program objectives. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-2: EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans (refer to https://www.epa.gov/quality/epa-qar-2-epa-requirements-quality-management-plans, Chapter 2). The recipient's QMP should be reviewed and updated annually as needed. The QMP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 45 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation.

The recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Requirements for QAPPs can be found at https://www.epa.gov/quality/template-developing-generic-quality-assurance-project-plan-or-plan-elements-model.

Deliverables
The awarded applicant will be required to provide a chart or list of deliverables, providing items and due dates.

C. Reporting

Quarterly or semiannual progress reports, as determined by the federal project officer, will be required as a condition of this award.

D. Disputes

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

E. Mandatory Disclosures

As required by 2 CFR § 200.113, non-federal entities or applicants for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR § 200.338 including suspension and debarment.

F. Combining Applications Into One Award

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

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact James Hargett via email at hargett.james@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-R3-CBP-22-02). All questions and answers will be posted on https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

In developing your application, you may find the following documents helpful. Websites for guidance documents are listed here. If you prefer a paper copy, please call 1-800-YOUR BAY.
Boundaries of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/maps

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement
Electronic copy of the *CBP Guidance for Data Management*
https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/201601/documents/attachment8cimsgrant_guidance.pdf

Electronic copy of the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page
EPA grantee forms
http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm

Electronic copy of the *Chesapeake Bay Program Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance*
https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans
https://www.epa.gov/grants/implementation-quality-assurance-requirements-organizations-receiving-epa-financial

Please visit the EPA Grants website (https://www.epa.gov/grants), the EPA Region 3 Grants website (https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3) or the Chesapeake Bay Program website (https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance) if you have questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Further information on CBP committees is located at:
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/how_we_are_organized.

Appendix A

Application Format

U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III

Chesapeake Bay Program Goal Implementation Teams Support, Scientific Community Support and Summer Student Program Management

EPA-R3-CBP-22-02

The following information must be provided, or the application may not be considered complete and may not be evaluated.

Project Narrative Format: Use the Project Narrative Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. Project narratives as described below shall not exceed 15 single-spaced pages. The project narrative must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 15-page limit includes all supporting materials, resumes or *curriculum vitae*, and letters of support but **excludes** the budget narrative, documentation of non-profit status, and forms 1 through 5 as listed in Section IV. F. Applicants must ensure that the project narrative clearly identifies the Activity number. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

1. Name, address (street and email), and contact information of the applicant

2. Background - Include the following in this section:

i) Project title & Activity Number
ii) Brief description of your organization.
iii) Documentation of non-profit status, if applicable.
iv) Brief biographies of applicant lead(s) including resumes and/or curriculum vitae.
v) Funding requested. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost-share or in-kind resources.
vi) UEI number — See Section IV of RFA.

3. Work plan - Include the following in this section:

i) A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements of the Program as described in Section I of the announcement.

ii) Budget detail: Use the budget detail Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a budget detail breakdown by the major budget categories (i.e. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). In each of the budgets, include the cost-share amount (a minimum of 5 percent for each of the total project costs) and demonstrate how the cost-share will be met, including, if applicable, letters of commitment from any third-party contributors. Please note that subaward costs must be itemized under a separate sub-line item within the "Other" budget cost category.

In addition, grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirement

for "Administrative Costs" under the Clean Water Act Section 117 (d)(4), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent administration cost cap is located in Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet. To calculate the specific cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

1) EPA amount (including any in-kind) ÷ 95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
2) 100% of Total Grant Amount × 5% = Applicant's Cost-Share Amount

iii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the application will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project.

1) Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outputs for the activity are provided in section C.2.

a. Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outcomes are included in section C.3.

iv) Review Criteria**:**
Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFA. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative.

With specific respect to the Programmatic Capability Past Performance factor in V.B: Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last five years (no more than five agreements and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

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 areas and address the environmental justice criterion in Section V. 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.

Appendix B
EPA-R3-CBP-22-02

SAMPLE
(DO NOT SUBMIT WORKSHEET WITH APPLICATION)

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST CAP WORKSHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: In accordance with Section 117(d)(4) and 117(e)(6) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the costs of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under Section 117(d) or 117(e) of the CWA shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. The annual grant award is the total costs including Federal and cost share amounts. The worksheet below is provided to assist you in calculating allowable administrative costs. The Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) should reflect how your administrative costs will comply with the cap. For specific guidance refer to page 2 of this sample "Compliance with CWA Section 117 Requirements Restricting Administrative Costs."

Total Costs	$ _____
Cap %	X .10
Limit on Administrative Costs	$ (a) _____
List Administrative Costs: (Budgeted costs for application)	
_____	$ _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Total	$ (b) _____

Line (b) cannot exceed Line (a).

COMPLIANCE WITH CWA SECTION 117
RESTRICTING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Statutory Authority

Under statutory authority, grantees applying for Chesapeake Bay Program grants/cooperative agreements under Section117 (d) or (e) must adhere to the requirement on administrative costs as follows:

Under Section 117(a)(1) Administrative Cost - The term "administrative cost" means the cost of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under this section.

Under Section 117(d)(4) - Administrative Costs. - Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Under Section 117(e)(6) - Administrative Costs. -Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Guidance for Determining Administrative Costs

As determined by EPA/CBPO, the following provides guidance in determining administrative costs for grants/cooperative agreements under Section 117 (d) and (e) of the Clean Water Act.

1. Administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits charged against the project or program element for the sole purpose of administering the grant/cooperative agreements shall not exceed 10% of the annual grant **award (Federal and cost share)**. One hundred percent of the salaries and fringe benefits related to these functions are considered administrative costs. Examples of administrative costs include, but are not limited to:

- preparation and submission of grant applications
- fiscal tracking of grants funds
- maintaining project files
- collection and submission of deliverables

2. Non-administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits related to the implementation of the project or program element of the grant/cooperative agreement are not considered administrative costs. None of the salaries and fringe benefit costs related to these functions shall be considered administrative costs. Example:

- the salaries and fringe benefits for technical staff to conduct work to accomplish specific Bay Program goals as outlined in the program or project elements are not administrative costs.

3. Calculation of Administrative Costs

In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, use the format above or a similar format to calculate the costs and include in the Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).

4. Questions Regarding Administrative Costs

The grantees shall direct questions to the EPA Project Officer who will determine what costs should be included as administrative costs on a case-by-case basis.