2023 Request for Applications: Puget Sound Action Agenda — Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead

1. Overview

1. **Federal Agency**: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Region 10
2. **Funding Opportunity Title**: Puget Sound Action Agenda – Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead
3. **Announcement Type:** Request for Applications (RFA)
4. **Funding Opportunity Number**: EPA-I-R10-PS-2023-001
5. **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number**: 66.123
6. **Dates**

Friday, March 31, 2023	RFA CLOSES – APPLICATIONS DUE
May 2023	ANTICIPATED NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION
July 2023	ANTICIPATED AWARD

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 (https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses).

Application Submission

All applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) as explained further in Section IV. Applications must be submitted by March 31, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. (ET). Late applications will not be considered for funding.

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

This RFA solicits proposals from eligible applicants to act, in coordination with the Puget Sound Partnership ("Partnership" or PSP), EPA, leaders and funders in agricultural and working land conservation, Puget Sound federally-recognized tribes, salmon recovery practitioners, and other relevant parties in the Puget Sound Management Conference, as the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead under the 2022-2026 Puget Sound Action Agenda, and subsequent updates of the Action Agenda.

A. Summary

Riparian areas extend from the edge of the water, up through adjacent wetlands and into the vegetated upland terraces. They are transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and support a broad array of physical, chemical, biological, and hydrological processes across watershed scales. As such, riparian corridors support key ecosystem services that provide multiple benefits to our local watersheds and communities. Degradation of these areas results in elevated water temperatures, sedimentation, nonpoint source pollution, invasive species, and impacts to the flows of waterways and salmon habitats across the Puget Sound basin, with significant impacts to our natural resources and tribal treaty rights. These issues will be further exacerbated with the impacts of climate change. Improving climate resiliency for working lands and riparian areas is an important opportunity to achieve benefits for salmon conservation and water quality, as well as producers and rural landowners. This RFA aims to use nature-based solutions (i.e., riparian conservation) to support salmon survival, as well as reduce flooding and erosion, by providing compensation to landowners for providing climate and water quality related ecosystem services.

This RFA announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible applicants that are interested in acting as the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead. This funding opportunity is focused on working with local programs and landowners to voluntarily protect and restore Puget Sound riparian habitat in priority watersheds, supporting salmon recovery and resilience to climate change. The successful applicant will develop a shared approach to achieving permanent protection (and restoration, as appropriate) of riparian areas concentrated within prioritized stream reaches across Puget Sound. The funding from this RFA is intended to go towards direct implementation of riparian conservation and climate resiliency goals, as well as other Vital Sign recovery objectives, as described in the 2022 Puget Sound Action Agenda (particularly Strategy 4 – Riparian Areas, and Strategy 20 – Climate Adaptation and Resilience as well as relevant Implementation Strategies).

The overall goal of the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead RFA is to establish an innovative and collaborative riparian conservation program that provides financial incentives for landowners to permanently protect and restore riparian areas important for providing ecosystem services, including those supporting salmon recovery, while successfully implementing approaches to promote climate resiliency.

EPA anticipates awarding up to $30 million over four years of incremental funding under this

announcement, to be leveraged using non-federal matching funds with the hope of building a robust and sustainable program.

The successful applicant will manage a subaward program for supporting riparian conservation efforts.

EPA strongly encourages coalitions of applicants for this funding opportunity (see Section IV.F. below).

B. Background

1. Puget Sound Riparian Habitat Conservation

As described in the 2022 Puget Sound Action Agenda, "Decades of land use and development have significantly degraded riparian vegetation corridors along Puget Sound rivers and streams. Intact riparian corridors are critical for keeping fresh and marine waters clean and cool, controlling erosion, moderating variability in water volume and timing of flow (flood storage), and offering key habitat for numerous terrestrial, freshwater, and interface species, such as salmon. Healthy riparian habitat ensures the integrity of the river- or streambank, thereby reducing erosion and flooding; provides a source of woody debris that create habitat features and slow flows; shades the water and reduces temperatures; delivers nutrients necessary to support the base of the food web; and filters out pollutants before they enter the water. Growing and protecting trees along the lengths of our rivers and streams safeguards our water, provides vital habitat for our threatened salmon species, and improves resilience to climate change. To realize those functions, time is of the essence: trees take years—or even decades—to grow tall enough to provide significant shade, habitat, and carbon sequestration benefits. Meanwhile, land conversion pressures from expanding development threaten to lock in riparian impairment. Intact forested riparian corridors can better preserve and restore habitat function than land converted to residential or commercial development. A comprehensive suite of tools, including improved regulatory frameworks and funding for incentives, must be deployed to deliver the scale and pace of riparian protection and restoration needed to achieve resilience in Puget Sound."

2. Puget Sound NEP Overview

EPA, Washington State, Tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and academia have partnered for over 30 years to protect and restore Puget Sound through the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 320 National Estuary Program (NEP). CWA Section 320 requires each NEP to establish a "Management Conference" to include representatives of each State and foreign nation located in part or whole in the estuarine zone of the estuary for which the conference is convened, tribes, regional agencies, appropriate federal agencies, local governments, affected industries, academic institutions, and the public.

Section 320 also requires the Management Conference to develop a "Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan" (CCMP) and to develop plans for its coordinated implementation. Management Conferences use a collaborative, consensus-building approach

to implement CCMPs. Moreover, each Management Conference ensures that the CCMP is uniquely tailored to the local environmental conditions and is based on local input, thereby supporting local priorities.

The Puget Sound Partnership has been designated by the EPA and Washington State as the lead state agency for the Management Conference for the Puget Sound NEP under CWA Section 320. The Puget Sound Partnership is defined in state legislation to include the Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, Science Panel and Executive Director with staff.

3. Puget Sound Action Agenda

The Puget Sound NEP's approved CCMP is the Puget Sound Action Agenda. In 2008, the Puget Sound Partnership published the first Puget Sound Action Agenda, a strategy to clean up, restore, and protect Puget Sound. EPA requests that each NEP review and update its CCMP every three to five years to keep the CCMP current and relevant. Accordingly, there have been multiple updates to the Puget Sound Action Agenda since 2008, including in 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2022. The current (2022-2026) Action Agenda, and previous versions of the Action Agenda, can be viewed at https://www.psp.wa.gov/2022AAupdate.php.

The 2022-2026 Action Agenda strategies, actions, and key opportunities are intended to guide partner implementation and innovation and inform the focus of public and private funding and implementation support by the PSP boards and regional partners. Subawards made under this Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems funding program must implement priorities within the Action Agenda. This RFA aims to directly support Action Agenda implementation with an emphasis on Strategy 4 – Riparian Areas, and Strategy 20 – Climate Adaptation and Resilience.

4. EPA Puget Sound Funding Model

Major components of the EPA Congressional allocation for Puget Sound for implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda include: a Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead (SIL) Award, a Shellfish SIL, a Stormwater SIL, a Tribal Implementation Lead, Puget Sound Partnership base program funding, and funding for Implementation Strategies and Science. Another key component of the Funding Model is the Puget Sound Tribal Capacity Program. EPA intends that these major entities responsible for implementing the Action Agenda under the funding model work together to maintain a high degree of awareness, communication, and coordination with each other. Working together maximizes synergies, leveraging, efficiencies, and shared best practices in implementing the Action Agenda. In addition, EPA is currently competing this RFA for Climate Resilient Riparian Systems, as well as a new Environmental Justice RFA. EPA's implementation of our funding model, and other aspects of our Puget Sound program, are described in the 2021 report, "EPA Geographic Program Funding at Work on Puget Sound Recovery," (EPA-910-K-21-001, February 2021).

C. Program Goals and Objectives

1. Goals of this Funding Opportunity

The overall goal of the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead RFA is to establish an innovative and collaborative riparian conservation program that provides financial incentives for landowners to set aside and restore riparian areas important for salmon recovery, while successfully implementing approaches to climate resiliency and riparian conservation that become a robust and sustainable program. The successful applicant will administer a subaward program to directly implement riparian conservation for climate resilience under the Puget Sound Action Agenda.

This RFA seeks to spur innovation in working voluntarily with landowners and build upon existing riparian and salmon conservation programs and processes, in partnership with state and federal agencies and funding programs, such as those of USDA/NRCS. This EPA funding opportunity aims to leverage other state and non-EPA federal funding sources and programs, in order to work most effectively with landowners to achieve maximum Puget Sound riparian conservation to promote climate resiliency. Note that other federal funds cannot be used as match for this award.

The applicant should demonstrate how it will leverage state and federal programs to help improve Puget Sound riparian conservation and climate resilience, describing in as much detail as possible how its work as the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead would support future, larger capital projects from other funding sources, such as levee setbacks or floodplain restoration. Applicants should refer to the "Compendium of Federal Nature-Based Resources for Coastal Communities, States, Tribes, and Territories" (April 2022), which summarizes federal resources and guidance on coastal green infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and habitat restoration that are available to assist coastal communities, states, tribes, and territories in evaluating, enabling, and investing in nature-based adaptation strategies. See https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/Nature-based-Solutions-Compendium.pdf.

The funding from this RFA is intended to fund subawards that conduct direct implementation of riparian conservation and associated climate resiliency goals, as described in the 2022 Puget Sound Action Agenda. The applicant should explain how it will achieve the relevant outcomes from the Puget Sound Action Agenda (particularly Strategy 4 – Riparian Areas, and relevant components of Strategy 20 – Climate Adaptation and Resilience, see excerpts below). The applicant should also consider the Action Agenda in its entirety, including the Puget Sound Implementation Strategies, since many sections are relevant and complimentary to this funding opportunity. See https://www.psp.wa.gov/implementation-strategies.php.

Relevant riparian conservation opportunities from the Puget Sound Action Agenda include:

- Improving residents' knowledge of and access to riparian areas to foster a sense of place and increase political will for protecting and restoring these areas.
- Connecting riparian area protection and restoration to benefits for both landowners and communities.
- Offering incentives in expedited procedural frameworks to make restorative practices easier and faster for landowners.

- Increasing resources and capacities of local agencies to protect and restore riparian areas.

The funding from this RFA will also help to implement Puget Sound Action Agenda and Strategy 20 – Climate Adaptation and Resilience. Relevant opportunities include:

- Implementing multi-benefit projects and programs that synergistically advance Puget Sound recovery goals and increase carbon sequestration in Puget Sound ecosystems, increase climate adaptation, and promote climate resilience. Develop strategies to protect and restore aquatic habitats that provide refuge for sensitive species and support resilience from climate-related impacts.
- Restoring and acquire areas that provide flood conveyance, slow water, and deposit sediment during flood events by reconnecting the floodplain.
- Expanding local capacity to educate, assist, and incentivize public and private landowners to work proactively to address future effects of climate change on water quantity and quality.
- Creating more equitable and resilient communities, economies, and businesses that sequester carbon, and adapt to changing conditions.

This RFA aims to support innovative new models, partnerships, and pilots to accelerate riparian conservation and climate resiliency across the Puget Sound basin by working collaboratively with the agricultural community and other rural land managers, as well as tribes, as appropriate. Topics and issues addressed in applications should include all of the following: meaningful incentives programs, the need for adequate and sustainable funding, and effective geographic prioritization approaches. This RFA will support innovative models that enable landowners to see economic value for salmon habitat and climate resiliency in their business models. EPA seeks to fund innovative pilots and possibly new public-private partnerships that can become sustainably funded ongoing programs (e.g., see Floodplains By Design at https://www.floodplainsbydesign.org/).

The Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead will incentivize and work voluntarily with landowners and relevant partners (such as tribes, conservation districts, local governments, land trusts, etc.) to protect and restore riparian habitat. The applicant should describe its partnerships with organizations with productive and established relationships with local landowner communities in priority watersheds.

To achieve the goal of permanent riparian habitat corridor protections, this funding will support innovative models and partnerships, which could include work such as: watershed and growth management planning; watershed stakeholder convening; support and funding for appraisals, feasibility/conceptual designs, and staff time; social marketing or social science to achieve desired outcomes; better coordination and communication between riparian or rural landowner incentive programs; and/or capacity funding for small organizations to participate in community conversations, recruit landowners, develop relationships, and initiate discussions about riparian conservation and future habitat protection or incentive work. The successful

applicant's innovative approach should include multi-benefit funding streams, such as those which can align farmland protection with riparian conservation tools. The applicant should build on the work, successes, and lessons learned from previous efforts.

The Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead will coordinate with and build upon the work of the state/federal/tribal Riparian Habitat Shared Strategy working group, as well as tribal sovereign fisheries co-managers to align capacities and advance science-based riparian protection, restoration, and management.

The RFA applicant should describe its approach to determine the geographic prioritization scheme for reach scale conservation work in strategic Puget Sound watersheds (to be further defined and justified by the applicant, with input from an advisory group to be convened after the cooperative agreement is awarded).

Applicants should refer to the following related planning documents when preparing their application:

Puget Sound Action Agenda 2022-2026, particularly:

- Strategy 4 Riparian Areas
- Strategy 20 Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Puget Sound Federal Task Force Action Plan 2022-2026, particularly:

- 2.2.3.3 Federal Coordination – Riparian Habitat
- 2.2.3.4 Protection and Restoration of Riparian Areas in Priority Reaches
- 2.2.3.8 Address Natural Resource Concerns on a Watershed Scale

2. Climate Resilience and Environmental Justice

EPA has long recognized broad national environmental priorities including the importance of integrating resilience to changing climate conditions into projects and planning, as well as addressing issues of environmental justice (EJ). In coordination with EPA under this cooperative agreement, the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead should develop practices and mechanisms to advance progress in these priority areas.

Climate change poses risks to human health, the environment, cultural resources, the economy, and quality of life. These changes are expected to create further challenges to protecting human health and welfare and the environment. Projects supported under this program, in implementing riparian, and supporting ecosystem services including salmon and shellfish conservation priorities within the Action Agenda, should contribute to helping communities and ecosystems become more sustainable and resilient to the effects of climate change. They could be designed to ensure that project outcomes are met even as climate changes, and could increase decision makers' ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of a changing climate. For example, EPA has long recognized the important role of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions in ecosystem restoration and in fostering

climate resilient communities. More recently, Executive Order 14052, dated November 15, 2021, "Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act," (Act) establishes as a priority "building infrastructure that is resilient and that helps combat the crisis of climate change." Protecting natural infrastructure and pursuing green infrastructure will be a core element in achieving such resilience and is an emphasis of the Puget Sound NEP. Information and resources on climate resilience and green infrastructure can be found here: https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure.

Our nation is guarding against the effects of the climate crisis by investing in resilience to climate change, through a focus on environmental justice and conservation. Nature-based solutions are often defined as actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems (land, water, coastal, or ocean) that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits (e.g., coastal protection, reduced flooding, decreased heat-island effects).

The strategic and effective use of nature-based solutions plays an important role in addressing coastal resilience challenges. Nature-based solutions offer significant benefits, monetary and otherwise, often at a lower cost than more traditional infrastructure. Riparian conservation is a nature-based solution that also provides climate resilience and salmon habitat benefits, as well as flood prevention. This RFA seeks to fund innovative nature-based solutions to the climate crisis by protecting priority riparian areas. More information and resources on climate resilience and nature-based solutions can be found here:

Compendium: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-04/nature-based-solutions-compendium.pdf

Full Report: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Nature-Based-Solutions-Roadmap.pdf

Resource Guide: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Nature-Based-Solutions-Resource-Guide-2022.pdf

Key opportunities from the Puget Sound Action Agenda for 2022-2026 to integrate climate change responses in efforts to protect and restore riparian areas include:

- Factoring future climate conditions into integrated planning processes for riparian protection and restoration projects.
- Promoting riparian protection and restoration actions that also increase carbon sequestration.
- Incorporating targeted climate change education into technical and financial assistance programs for landowners.

Regarding environmental justice and as described in EPA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, EPA will center its mission on the integration of justice, equity, and civil rights across the nation's environmental protection enterprise, and will build capacity and climate resilience and maximizing benefits to overburdened and underserved communities. Centering its work on justice is especially important in an era when EPA must simultaneously break the cycle of

historic environmental injustices while maximizing protection for these same communities as they are too often hit worst and first from the impacts of a changing climate. See https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-03/fy-2022-2026-epa-strategic-plan.pdf. EPA has long had a focus on this topic, both in a general sense, as well as its specific relationship to EPA's relationships with sovereign Tribal governments. For example, in 2014, EPA developed an "EPA Policy on Environmental Justice for Working with Federally-Recognized Tribes and Indigenous Peoples." Applicants should refer to the 2022 Puget Sound Action Agenda's strategies for environmental justice and addressing disproportionate impacts to communities when planning an application to this funding opportunity.

3. Objectives of the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead

EPA anticipates that the following three objectives are needed to achieve the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead program goals:

- Make and Manage Subawards. Develop and carry out a system for making subawards to authorized entities;
- Innovation and Partner Engagement. Develop and implement innovative models and mechanisms for engaging with partners to achieving sustainable results; and
- Manage the Cooperative Agreement. Adaptively manage the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead cooperative agreement with EPA.

Specific activities supportive of these objectives are described in the following sections. Applicants should describe how they will address these objectives in their applications and are encouraged to be innovative and build from the factors and considerations described below.

a) Make and Manage Subawards

The applicant's program to make and manage subawards should address the following factors and considerations:

- How the subaward process will ensure that funded projects will advance relevant Implementation and Institutional Strategies within the Action Agenda, particularly Strategies 4 and 20.
- How the applicant will develop a geographic focus and prioritization scheme for reach scale conservation work in strategic Puget Sound watersheds and apply that approach to selecting subawards.
- How solicitations for subaward proposals will be developed and managed, what criteria and review processes will be used to process proposals and make decisions on whether to fund them, and how this subaward cycle will be documented and managed.
- How collaborative, supportive relationships with the subaward population will be established, maintained, and demonstrated. This also includes a comprehensive working understanding of riparian and salmon conservation issues and priorities, working lands and rural landowners, tribal treaty rights, and how these are represented in the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Applicants should also demonstrate what existing knowledge, relationships, and mechanisms the applicant organization has for working

with Puget Sound landowners to achieve voluntary riparian conservation and salmon recovery goals.

- How subaward performance will be monitored. This includes what systems will ensure that subawards are made expeditiously and performed effectively and that subaward funds are drawn down timely such that unliquidated obligations are minimized. Monitoring subaward performance is intended to ensure that the subawards are achieving the objectives of the program, expected outputs and outcomes, and other subaward requirements.
- How detailed working knowledge of relevant components of the Action Agenda, the Puget Sound Federal Task Force Action Plan and riparian conservation and resilience science, policy and tools will be developed and maintained; and how this knowledge will be used to support the subrecipients under this program. Support to subrecipients could take a variety of forms, including email and other written materials, webinars, workshops, trainings, or other types of information sessions, or links to support provided by PSP, Strategic Initiative Leads, the Tribal Implementation Lead, or agricultural, conservation, or other partners.
- How technical and administrative support will be provided to subawardees. This includes technical capacity to review and ensure subaward workplans are feasible and appropriate to meet outputs and outcomes, and to be a resource to subrecipients who may seek technical support throughout the conduct of their projects. This also includes support for compliance with EPA grant requirements that pass through to subrecipients (e.g., relating to quality assurance, riparian buffers, peer review, and other program requirements such as those mentioned in Sections VI and VIII of this RFA). Again, support could take a variety of forms, including email and other written materials, webinars, workshops, trainings, or other types of information sessions, or links to support provided by PSP, Strategic Initiative Leads, conservation districts, local governments, tribes, or Management Conference partners.
- How subaward work products and reports will be made available and/or proactively shared for the benefit of both the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead subrecipient and broader ecosystem recovery community. This may include program-wide analyses and syntheses of work products along specific themes or lines (e.g., analyses/syntheses of Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead contributions to habitat restoration); highlighting individual subrecipient work products, etc. This may also include convening conferences, workshops, or other venues for sharing lessons learned, best practices, or other focus areas among subrecipients and other Puget Sound riparian conservation practitioners. Finally, this may also entail supporting and encouraging subrecipients to share their work products and activities through conferences, workshops, professional associations, journal publications, and other venues.

- How climate resilience and environmental justice will be reflected and, as appropriate, integrated into the subaward program. This may include activities to study, evaluate, model, plan, and prepare for the impacts of climate change on Puget Sound ecosystem protection and restoration activities, and other considerations noted in this solicitation. This may also include applying Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead technical expertise to helping sub-awardees integrate climate change adaptation and resilience into project design and implementation.

b) Innovation and Partner Engagement

The selected recipient will be part of the of the EPA Puget Sound funding model, and the cooperative agreement holder will be expected to operate in a collaborative manner with other entities in the funding model structure.

The Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead will build from an approach grounded in the current EPA Puget Sound funding model and the Puget Sound Action Agenda, the Treaty Rights at Risk Initiative, and the Puget Sound Federal Task Force. This RFA does not create a new Puget Sound Strategic Initiative Lead (SIL). Rather, the successful applicant will be expected to collaborate with the Strategic Initiatives in their role as policy leads for Habitat, Stormwater, and Shellfish, particularly the Habitat SIL. The successful applicant will also be expected to seek opportunities for collaboration with tribal work funded under the Puget Sound Tribal Implementation Lead award, which includes riparian and climate resilience efforts. See https://pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov/ for more information on the Puget Sound Strategic Initiative Leads. The application should explain how the applicant will work successfully within these established frameworks and partnerships.

As explained in Section I.B. above, all National Estuary Programs such as the Puget Sound NEP are guided by a Management Conference[1]. The Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead will be administering this program within the context of other implementation entities, within the larger Management Conference framework. We expect the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead entity to establish mechanisms and practices through which it will engage within and integrate its activities. The applicant's program to engage and participate with Management Conference partners should address the following factors and considerations:

- How the applicant would use this award to create new, innovative models and partnerships to achieve the goals of Strategies 4 and 20 in the Puget Sound Action

[1] EPA states that NEP Management Conferences, in general, are "made up of diverse stakeholders including citizens, local, state, and Federal agencies, as well as with non-profit and private sector entities. Using a consensus-building approach and collaborative decision-making process, each MC works closely together to implement the CCMP. The MC ensures that the CCMP is uniquely tailored to the local environmental conditions, is based on local input, and supports local priorities" http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/nep/. For Puget Sound specifically, the Management Conference is described on p. 2, Appendix A, of the 2018-2022 Puget Sound Action Agenda (https://psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_center.php).

Agenda and to leverage across various funding sources to achieve healthy and climate resilient riparian areas across Puget Sound.

- How the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead would support future, larger capital projects from other funding sources (e.g. levy setbacks or riparian habitat restoration).
- How the applicant will build on the work, successes, and lessons learned from previous riparian conservation and climate resilience efforts.
- How the applicant will draw upon partnerships with organizations with productive and established relationships with local landowner communities to achieve results in priority watersheds.
- How the applicant will support innovative new models, partnerships, and pilots to accelerate Puget Sound climate resiliency and riparian conservation by working collaboratively with the agricultural community and other rural land managers, as well as tribes, as appropriate. Topics and issues addressed should include: meaningful incentives programs, and the need for adequate and sustainable funding.
- How work under this award will leverage innovative and multi-benefit funding streams.
- How the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems program activities would be reported into established Management Conference accountability mechanisms, such as the Puget Sound Info platform, and other platforms or processes led by the Puget Sound Partnership. This should also include how the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead's subaward products and activities would be tagged or mapped onto Action Agenda activities and onto the adaptive management framework that supports Action Agenda implementation, known as the Progress Measures Framework, and which includes the Puget Sound Vital Signs, Indicators, and Targets. This is so connections between the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead portfolio of activities and the Action Agenda and its supporting adaptive management framework can be clearly and readily articulated, summarized, and communicated.
- How the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead program would, in an ongoing basis, interface, communicate, and coordinate with federally-recognized Puget Sound tribes and their salmon recovery priorities.
- How the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead would, in an ongoing basis, interface, communicate, and coordinate with federal, state, and local agricultural and/or rural land conservation funding agencies such as NRCS and conservation districts in order to be effective, strategic, and complementary in working with landowners and funding riparian conservation programs.

c) Manage the Cooperative Agreement

The Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead must comply with all terms and conditions, policies, and requirements relating to managing federal assistance agreements. The Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead will also need to ensure and support its subrecipient community in complying with all terms and conditions, policies, and requirements relating to

federal assistance that flow down to subrecipients from the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead award. In addition, the selected applicant is expected to adaptively manage Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead award by periodically developing and applying insights and lessons learned from past experiences with Action Agenda implementation programs to ongoing conduct of the program. The applicant's program to manage the cooperative agreement arising from this RFA should address the following factors and considerations:

- Working with the EPA Project Officer to establish, staff, and sustain regular and robust mechanisms for communicating on the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead cooperative agreement. This may include regular (e.g., biweekly) check-ins with the EPA Project Officer; dedicated conversations to support semiannual progress reporting requirements; and other mechanisms.
- Mechanisms and systems to proactively manage and track grant and subaward funds to ensure compliance with targets that EPA may specify regarding unliquidated obligations.
- Mechanisms and systems to manage and track compliance of all aspects of the grant and subaward conduct to ensure compliance with all EPA Terms and Conditions. This includes required semiannual progress reporting (both from subawardees to the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead, and from the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead to EPA); completing all required closeout processes (both from subawardees to the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead, and from the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead to EPA).
- Update the cooperative agreement workplan annually with EPA to coincide with incrementally-funded awards, develop communications about the program, represent the program at conferences and events, and cover close-out, synthesis, and presentation activities.
- Mechanisms and processes to periodically affirm that the organization's senior leadership is kept informed and supports the direction and conduct of the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead's work, and that the work of this the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead is well integrated into and coordinated with the organization's strategic goals as well as with the organization's commitment to collaborative engagement in the Puget Sound Management Conference and Action Agenda implementation.
- Processes to periodically compile and address feedback on the program and adjusting if needed to strengthen achievement of program objectives. This may include obtaining or compiling feedback and communication from subrecipients on any aspect of program administration and support; reviewing the history of the EPA funded Watershed Lead Organization, Habitat SIL, and other relevant riparian conservation programs (e.g. CREP, Voluntary Stewardship Program, EQIP, Riparian Management Zone materials, etc.); and/or reviewing outputs and synthesizing themes, lessons learned, and recommendations for ongoing management of the program. This may also

include obtaining or compiling feedback from key ecosystem recovery, Funding Model, and Management Conference partners, relating to Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead program goals, objectives, progress, and the degree to which these are known and communicated.

D. EPA's Strategic Plan Linkages, Environmental Results, and Logic Models

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements with the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements,

www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-03/documents/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf). EPA also requires that applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs, environmental outcomes, and performance measurements to be achieved under assistance agreements. These linkages, outputs, outcomes, and performance measures are described below.

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan

The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 5, "Ensure clean and safe water for all communities" Objective 5.2, "Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds." Under this goal and objective, "Clean and safe water is a vital resource that is essential to the protection of human health. Without clean water, communities and economies cannot thrive. EPA is committed to ensuring clean and safe water for all, especially for vulnerable communities of color, underserved communities, and Tribal communities." Applicants must explain in their application how their activities and projects will further this goal and objective.

Please read EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan at
https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-03/fy-2022-2026-epa-strategic-plan.pdf
for more information.

2. Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes, and Performance Measures

Applicants should include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed activities in terms of well-defined measurable outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined quantifiable outcomes that will demonstrate how the work under the grant will contribute to the priorities described above. 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 expected outputs from the activities and project(s) conducted by the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead selected under this solicitation may include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Draft and final plans for a subaward cycle that includes a solicitation phase, a proposal review process and phase, a subaward contracting phase, a subrecipient monitoring and support phase, and a closeout phase.
- Draft and final plans for coordinating with PSP, SILs, federal agencies, tribes, and other salmon recovery, rural/working lands, and Management Conference partners.
- Draft and final plans for supporting subaward applicants in identifying connections between the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead and climate resilience priorities and the activities, strategies, and other content of the Puget Sound Action Agenda.
- Documentation of subaward monitoring activities.
- Memos, presentations, reports, or other documentation of activities to synthesize the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems program, its products, successes, challenges, opportunities that can inform adaptive management of the program.
- Documentation of compliance with award terms and conditions, as appropriate (e.g., documentation of applicant quality assurance and quality management systems, a record of submitted progress reports, etc.).

Examples of outputs that could be generated by subawards awarded by the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead selected under this solicitation may include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Products associated with routine subrecipient reporting, such as semi-annual progress and final reports.
- Programs or projects to target riparian protection and restoration.
- Coordinated investment strategies developed/ implemented to maximize cross agency effectiveness for riparian habitat restoration and climate resilience.
- Invasive species control programs to preserve or restore native vegetation in riparian habitat areas.
- Number of landowners who voluntarily participate in a climate resilience and/or riparian conservation program. The number of landowners would be reported as a quantifiable output.
- Public outreach and education activities conducted to improve climate resilience and salmon habitat on working lands.

Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI.C. of this announcement, “Reporting Requirements.”

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 entirely

achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Activities and projects to be funded under this announcement are expected to produce programmatic and /or environmental outcomes including but not limited to:

- Measurable progress toward targets established for Vital Signs and Indicators of greatest importance to riparian conservation and climate resiliency is reported in State of the Sound reports.
- More integrated, proactive, and ecologically protective Growth Management Act and critical areas ordinances planning and implementation.
- The following are examples of potentially relevant indicators, but the exact indicators would need to be determined on a case-by-case basis:
    - Reduction in the number of water bodies on Washington's Impaired Waters list for related water quality impairments. (e.g. temperature, sediment, or stream health, as measured by the Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (B-IBI)).
    - Net increase in acres and continuity of native riparian vegetation in the Puget Sound basin.
    - Improved ecosystem function observed in riparian habitat areas.

The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful process and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. It is expected that the description of performance measures will include defined benchmark or change in status, either in programmatic function or environmental condition, and that the performance measures be time constrained and/or quantifiable such as the following:

- Performance Measure Example 1 (for Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead): Subaward recipients complete projects within the stated timeframe and unliquidated obligations are minimized.
- Performance Measure Example 2 (for subawards managed by the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead): Number of feet of riparian corridors protected or restored.

The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What measurable short term and longer-term results will the project achieve?
- How will long term climate resilience be achieved through riparian protection and restoration efforts?
- How will progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) be measured, and how will the planned approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

Indicators of success from the Puget Sound Action Agenda (Strategy 4 – Riparian Areas) that the RFA should accomplish include:

- Increasing acres of riparian habitat protected or restored, including on agricultural land and within urban growth areas (UGAs), Puget Sound-wide.
- Increasing acres of private land treated with riparian planting.
- Stabilizing water temperature in streams and rivers.
- Increasing the extent of forest cover in freshwater riparian zones.

To ensure your application supports implementation of both the Puget Sound Action Agenda and EPA's national strategic plan objectives, you should carefully consider the underlying logic of your proposed tasks, outputs, and outcomes, and how they support the objectives of this solicitation. You may include a more formal graphical logic model with your application. A logic model summarizes the major elements of your project, and connects strategic objectives to your proposed resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes. You may also describe the underlying logic of your proposed program of work in narrative form.

See Appendix A for information on environmental results and logic models.

E. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for the assistance agreement to be funded under this announcement is Section 320(g) of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 33.U.S.C.1251-1387). EPA's authority to obligate grant funds is subject to the availability of appropriated funds. EPA anticipates that this award will be funded with Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding.

F. 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 (in Section VII) to obtain the provisions.

II. Award Information

A. Number and Amount of Awards

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement from this RFA, subject to the availability of funds, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. Funding for the award is expected to be provided incrementally over a four-year period, with an initial amount of approximately $8,000,000 to $10,000,000 for the first year and subsequent incremental funding through year four. Incremental funding after the initial award is subject to future

appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is up to approximately $30,000,000 in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding for the 4-year funding period, for a maximum 6-year project period. The award will be issued and managed through EPA's Region 10 Office.

B. Start Date and Length of Project Period

The successful applicant should plan for projects to begin on or after **July 1, 2023**. EPA will accept proposals for a 4-year funding period, for a 6-year total project period to allow time for subaward work completion and spend down. The proposal must clearly demonstrate how the project will be sustained for the time frame proposed.

C. Funding Type

The successful applicant will be issued a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA 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; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

In addition, under the award to be made under this RFA, EPA involvement may include: (1) negotiating the initial Scope of Work for the cooperative agreement and also annual amendments when incremental funding is applied for. EPA may re-negotiate annual work plans and budgets so long as the revised workplans and budget are consistent with the scope of work of the agreement and the solicitation and EPA's annual federal budget; (2) monitor the project management and execution throughout the assistance agreement's project and budget period; (3) provide technical assistance and coordination as requested or needed by the recipient; and (4) review and approve technical deliverables.

D. Other Award Provisions

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no award under this announcement or to a make a smaller award than expected. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it

will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

III. Eligibility Information

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses.

A. Eligible Applicants

As described in Assistance Listing 66.123, eligible entities are:

- Federal and Washington State government agencies;
- Public and private institutions of higher education located in the United States;
- Units of local government organized under Washington State law and located within the Greater Puget Sound basin;
- Special purpose districts, as defined by Washington State law at RCW 36.93.020, including but not limited to, irrigation districts, and water and sewer districts that are located in or govern land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound basin; and conservation districts located in or governing land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound Basin;
- Watershed planning units formed under RCW 90.82.040 and RCW 90.82.060, local management boards organized under RCW 90.88.030, salmon recovery lead entities organized pursuant to RCW 77.85, regional fisheries enhancement groups organized pursuant to RCW 77.95.060 and Marine Resource Committees organized pursuant to RCW 36.125.010 and RCW 36.125.020 if they are located within or their jurisdictions include waters and/or lands within the greater Puget Sound basin;
- Intrastate organizations such as associations of cities, counties or conservation districts in the greater Puget Sound basin;
- Nonprofit non-governmental entities, as defined by 2 C.F.R 200.70, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations (the term includes tax-exempt. nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that 2 CFR 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a non-profit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status;

such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. 1611, and;

- Federally recognized tribes located within the greater Puget Sound basin and any consortium of these eligible tribes.

An Intertribal consortium must have adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the member tribes to apply for and receive assistance. Documentation that demonstrates the existence of the partnership of Indian Tribal governments may consist of Tribal Council resolutions, Intertribal consortia resolutions in conjunction with a Tribal Council resolution from each member tribe, or other written certification from a duly authorized representative of each tribal government that clearly demonstrates that a partnership of tribal governments exists. An Intertribal consortium resolution is not adequate documentation of the member tribe's authorization of the consortium unless it includes a written certification from a duly authorized representative of each tribal government.

The greater Puget Sound basin is defined as all watersheds draining to the U.S. waters of Puget Sound, southern Georgia Basin, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Sub-awards and sub-grants must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The recipient must administer the cooperative agreement, will be accountable to the EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, sub-recipients or sub-grantees are accountable to the primary recipient or grantee for proper use of EPA funding.

Coalitions may not include for-profit organizations that will provide services or products to the successful applicant. For-profit organizations are not eligible for sub-awards. For-profit organizations are eligible to receive contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Please see EPA's definition of consultants in Section 2 C.F.R. Part 200, as applicable. For additional information, please review the following Federal Register announcement titled *"Interpretation of Regulations Related to Payments to Consultants Under Grants":* *https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2004/04/07/04-7867/interpretation-of-regulations-related-to-payments-to-consultants-under-grants*

EPA recognizes that scientific, technical, engineering and mathematical (STEM) competence is essential to the Nation's future well-being in terms of national security and competitive economic advantage. For instance, the health and vitality of the economy is predicated, in part, on the availability of an adequate supply of scientists, technicians, engineers and mathematicians, to develop innovative technologies and solutions. In other words, this country must engage all available minds to address the challenges it faces. Minorities, women, and persons with disabilities historically have been under-represented in the STEM fields. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants including, women, minorities, and

persons with disabilities to apply.

For-profit business entities, private individuals, and families are not eligible to apply.

B. Non-Federal Match/Cost Share Requirement

The Clean Water Act, at § 320(g)(3)(a)(II), provides that the Federal share of a grant under this program for a fiscal year shall not exceed 50% of the aggregate costs of implementing the project. For this RFA, this means that applicants must be able to show in their proposals that they will be able to provide and/or coordinate match for this project such that they or other members of the Management Conference will spend an equal amount of nonfederal funds on implementing these projects during the budget period. Applicants should identify how they plan to coordinate match, and/or the source(s) of the anticipated non-federal match together with the nature of the projects funded with the non-federal match. If applicable, proposals must show that the projects providing the nonfederal match are "committed" and that they have not been used to provide nonfederal match for any other federal financial assistance.

Forms of Match: The match requirement may be met in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions include volunteer or donated time, equipment, expertise, salaries, other verifiable costs, etc. and are subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The match must be for allowable project costs. Matching funds are considered assistance agreement funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the work plan. All assistance agreement funds are subject to federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of assistance agreement funds (examples of restrictions are outlined in Section III.D of this announcement) also apply to the use of matching funds. Other Federal assistance agreements may not be used as match without specific statutory authority. If matching requirements for incremental funding awarded under this RFA change as a result of future legislation on restoration of Puget Sound or otherwise, EPA will make appropriate adjustments to match requirements in the terms and conditions of the cooperative agreements.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications from eligible applicants that meet the threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V. Applicants deemed ineligible as a result of the threshold review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Substantial Compliance

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Section III to be considered eligible.

a. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this solicitation or else

they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.

b. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

c. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with Grants.gov or SAM.gov. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission outside of Grants.gov.

2. Applications must demonstrate that subaward projects will implement actions that are in the approved Action Agenda, described in Section I. C.
3. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements as described in Section III. A above.
4. Applicants must demonstrate how they will meet the match requirements as described in Section III.B above.
5. Applicants must request funding for activities that will be implemented in the United States portion of the Salish Sea (Puget Sound is the U.S. portion of the Salish Sea, with Canadian waters to the North). Applications with international work plan elements must demonstrate that they directly and primarily benefit U.S. waters, resources, or policy interests to restore and protect the greater Puget Sound ecosystem.
6. Applications which request EPA assistance funds above the total amount specified in this RFA ($30 million) are not eligible and will not be reviewed.
7. Ineligible activities: If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Actions required under NPDES Phase l and ll stormwater permits existing at the time of this

announcement will generally not be funded. Applicants proposing stormwater-related activities in Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) areas must include a statement certifying that the work proposed for funding is either not required under a current stormwater discharge permit or it strategically supports Puget Sound targets and environmental outcomes that would otherwise not accrue. EPA may re-evaluate this restriction as future permit changes are made.

Award funds may not be used for matching funds for other federal assistance agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Award funding must be authorized by the statutory authority (e.g. Section 320(g) of the Clean Water Act) and may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. 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). EPA reserves the right to make final decisions regarding actions or costs incurred that are contrary or damaging to the intent and purposes of the Puget Sound National Estuary program (NEP), the Puget Sound Action Agenda and Management Conference, for which award funds may not be used.

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under 2 C.F.R. 200, Subpart E.

Expenses Incurred Prior to the Project Period: Except for eligible pre-award costs as defined in 2 C.F.R. 200.458 and as authorized by 2 C.F.R. 200.309 and 2 C.F.R. 1500.8, no funds awarded under this RFA shall be used to cover expenses incurred prior to the project period set forth in any assistance agreement funded under this RFA. Additionally, except for eligible pre-award costs as defined above, expenses incurred prior to the project period set forth in any assistance agreement funded under this RFA are not eligible as a cost share.

IV. Application and Submission Information

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

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

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 IV.C. *Technical Issues with Submission* below.

B. Submission Instructions

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

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

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

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

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

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

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through

Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the application submission deadline.

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

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

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

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

4. Application Submission Deadline
Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than March 31, 2023 at 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

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

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than March 31, 2023, 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all of the application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package 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 the Grants.gov website*)* within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Melissa Whitaker (whitaker.melissa@epa.gov). Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

C. Technical Issues with Submission

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.

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 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.

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 does 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 Whitaker.melissa@epa.gov with the FON (EPA-I-R10-PS-2023-001) 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. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, email Whitaker.melissa@epa.gov as soon as internet access is available and explain the circumstances.

Unsuccessful transfer of the application package. If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from a 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 Whitaker.melissa@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.

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 Whitaker.melissa@epa.gov with the Funding Opportunity Number (EPA-I-R10-PS-2022-001) 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 an attachment of the entire application in PDF format.
Please note that successful submission through the Grants.gov website or via email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

D. Overview of Required Application Package Materials

The application package must include all of the following materials:

1. Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Please note that the organizational UEI number must be included on the revised SF-424.
2. Standard Form (SF)-424A, Budget Information.
3. EPA Key Contacts Form (EPA Form 5700-54)
4. EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre-award Compliance Review Report.
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Application Narrative, prepared as described in Section IV. E. below.

E. Detailed Contents of Application Narrative

The Application Narrative should include the summary information page and workplan as described below. The Application Narrative cannot exceed a maximum of 20 single-spaced, typed pages and should use no less than 12-point font. Supporting materials such as resumes and letters of support can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the above noted 20 page limit. Ensure that your narrative addresses all of the evaluation criteria in Section V and any appropriate threshold eligibility criteria from Section III.C.

Summary Information Page: The Application Narrative must include a Summary Information Page, recommended not to exceed one page in length. The Summary Information Page must include the following information:

1. Application Title.
2. Applicant Information – Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
3. Project Period - Provide proposed beginning date and ending date.
4. Funding Requested – Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA for the proposed work period. See Summary Information on Page 1 of this RFA for information on total estimated funding.
5. Total Project Cost – Specify total cost of the project. Identify amount of funding from other sources for required non-federal match.
6. Abstract: Provide a proposal abstract of no longer than 150 words. Include a statement of the proposed objective, the proposed approach affirming capacity to work with the Puget Sound NEP Management Conference and relevant climate and riparian partners, and the anticipated outputs and outcomes.
7. UEI number.

Workplan: The Application Narrative must also include a workplan. The workplan should explicitly describe how the applicant proposes to meet the objectives in Section I of this RFA. In the work plan the applicant should demonstrate that the applicant meets all elements of the threshold criteria in Section III, including the non-federal match.

EPA is soliciting proposals for a subaward program to be implemented over a four-year funding period and six-year project period. It is important for proposals to describe levels of effort and workplans that are sustainable over the full six-year period. Because future funding levels are not guaranteed, applicants should present a proposed scope of work with well thought out sequencing and objectives described in the near term as well as objectives over the longer term expected for the assistance agreement. By noting tasks or components that are severable (independent of other actions) or that could be funded at variable levels, applicants can submit proposals that provide flexibility to incrementally award funds in later years of the project period.

The workplan must address the following information:

1. Statement of organizational interest. Briefly explain why your organization is applying to lead this program. Explain how the objectives of this program, stated in Section I of this RFA, align with your organization's interests and responsibilities.
    a. Describe your organization's commitment to being a collaborative and engaged member of the Puget Sound Management Conference and to implementing the Puget Sound Action Agenda, particularly Strategies 4 and 20.

b. Describe internal mechanisms you will use to coordinate your organization's Climate Resilient Riparian Systems activities, including your organization's other Management Conference activities.
c. Describe the extent to which your organization has formed a coalition to successfully approach this work.

2. Proposed tasks, outputs, and outcomes to "Make and Manage Subawards" (described in Section I.C). For each task, identify the level of effort, performance measurements, timeline milestones, or other means that will be used to track and measure progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs. See Section I.D. for a description of environmental results, including performance measures, outputs, and outcomes. Applicants acquiring professional or commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 2 C.F.R. 200.317 - 200.326 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism. See Section IV. of this RFA.

    a. Describe how the subaward process will ensure that funded projects will advance the 2022-2026 Action Agenda Implementation Strategies with an emphasis of strategies #4 (Riparian) and #20 (Climate Resilience).
    b. Describe your approach to determine a geographic focus and prioritization scheme for reach scale conservation work in strategic Puget Sound watersheds, and how you will apply that approach to selecting subawards.

3. Proposed tasks, outputs, and outcomes needed for "Innovation and Partner Engagement" (described in Section I.C.). For each task, identify the level of effort, performance measurements, timeline milestones, or other means that will be used to track and measure progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs. See Appendix A for a description of environmental results, including performance measures, outputs, and outcomes.
    a. Demonstrate how your organization will leverage other funding sources to improve Puget Sound climate resiliency and riparian conservation. Describe, in as much detail as possible, how your work as the Puget Sound Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead would support future, larger capital projects from other funding sources.
    b. Describe how your organization will build on the work, successes, and lessons learned from previous riparian conservation and climate resilience efforts.

4. Proposed tasks, outputs, and outcomes needed to "Manage the Cooperative Agreement" (described in Section I.C.). For each task, identify the level of effort, performance measurements, timeline milestones, or other means that will be used to track and measure progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs. See

Section I.D. for a description of environmental results, including performance measures, outputs, and outcomes.

5. Other required elements. Briefly describe your organization's approach to the following items. For each of the following items, identify the performance measurements, timeline milestones, or other means that will be used to track and measure progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs.
    a. Partnering experience and approach: Outline your organization's experience and approach to collaborating, coordinating, and communicating within the context of riparian conservation, including with rural landowners and the agricultural community, state and federal agencies and funders, conservation districts, land trusts, local governments, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and salmon recovery practitioners.
        1. Describe how you will draw upon partnerships with organizations with productive and established relationships with local landowner communities to achieve results in priority watersheds.

    b. Innovation: Provide examples of the innovative approaches to climate resilience and riparian conservation that you will employ.
        1. Describe how you will support innovative new models, partnerships, and pilots to accelerate Puget Sound climate resiliency and riparian conservation by working collaboratively with the agricultural community and other rural land managers, as well as tribes, as appropriate. Topics and issues addressed should include: meaningful incentives programs, and the need for adequate and sustainable funding.
        2. Describe how your work under this award will leverage innovative and multi-benefit funding streams.

    c. Timeline: Include a chart of milestones and timelines for accomplishing tasks, including estimates of timelines for proposed future tasks that may not yet be fully determined.
    d. Non-federal match: Discuss how you will provide or coordinate the required match as described in Section III.B. This discussion should include how the applicant's organization will collaborate with the PSP and other state and local entities to identify and secure sources of non-federal match for subaward projects as well as the applicant's own use of award funds for direct costs requiring non-federal match. Also note that all matching funds are subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.
    e. Climate Change Resilience and Environmental Justice: Discuss how the proposed work plan addresses the impacts of climate change and builds ecosystem resilience (see Section I). Applicants are encouraged include in their work plan

policies and procedures to work proactively with their subawardees to build climate change adaptation and resilience into subaward project design and implementation. Also describe how considerations of environmental justice will inform your program.

f. Environmental Results — Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures: Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the overall program effort (see Section I.D) including what performance measurements, milestone timelines, or other means will be used to track and measure your progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs including those identified in Section I.D and how the results of the project will be evaluated.

g. Adaptive Management: Describe the system that you will use to monitor and measure the progress of Puget Sound riparian conservation and climate resilience and the projects funded with subawards. This discussion should address how your organization would provide monitoring information to the PSP and work with the Puget Sound Management Conference boards and stakeholders and how your organization's monitoring of subawards would be used to adaptively manage the implementation of the Action Agenda.

h. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe: (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; and (iii) your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

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

and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors. The applicant may describe prior experience it has had in making and managing subawards and the degree to which that history has been successful. If the applicant proposes to rely on a subrecipient or collaborating agency to make and manage subawards, that other organization's formal documented system must be described in the workplan. The discussion of the subaward management system should also describe the internal controls that the organization has in place to ensure that the procedures in the subaward management system are being properly implemented. Alternatively, if there currently is no formal documented system, the proposal narrative must describe your organization's plan and schedule for developing such a system in compliance with applicable State law.

6. Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative. The detailed budget and budget narrative should provide a detailed breakout of the approximate funding used for each major activity presented and be supported by a thorough internal financial management system. The detailed budget and budget narrative must include:
    a. A description of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task.
    b. A description of the applicant's approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.
    c. Itemized costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. For those selected for awards, applicants will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award. This is not a necessary document for application but is necessary for the selected applicants to provide prior to award.

Please note that EPA has developed guidance that can greatly assist applicants in preparing a budget and correctly characterizing costs for applications. Please see EPA's grant website for this guidance. The document called "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance" is particularly helpful. EPA encourages applicants to use this important resource when preparing the detailed budget and budget narrative for this solicitation.

7. Annual Grantee Conference
   The recipient may attend one or more appropriate conferences each year, which may be within the Puget Sound region. The specific conferences will be determined in consultation with the EPA Project Officer. The purpose of this requirement is to provide recipients with opportunities to learn about and benefit from other relevant initiatives

and programs that relate to the funded work; to exchange information about their funded work with organizations that may benefit from their experience; and generally to raise awareness within the Puget Sound, Salish Sea, and large aquatic ecosystem protection and restoration communities of the funded work Example of potentially relevant conferences include, but are not limited to, the biennial Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference and local or regional meetings of Tribal, professional, scientific, or other relevant associations. Specific conferences will depend on the nature of the work proposed. Recipient will be allowed to use award funds to pay for travel and lodging. Applicants should include anticipated costs for attending conferences in their proposed budget.

F. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date and time for submission of proposals is **March 31, 2023, 11:59 PM Eastern Time (ET). Proposals submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding**.

G. Coalition Coverage

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subrecipients of the recipient (the "pass-through entity"). Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 C.F.R. 200.1 and comply with EPA's Subaward Policy. The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 C.F.R. 200.332, subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for proper use of EPA funding. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards under this grant program but may receive procurement contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and/or 2 C.F.R. Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 C.F.R. 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants. Refer to the Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a "partner" or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements.

EPA strongly encourages coalitions to apply for this RFA opportunity.

H. Webinar on this Solicitation

EPA is hosting two webinars on January 25, 2023 and February 9, 2023 for interested applicants

for this solicitation. The purpose of the webinars will be to answer any questions interested applicants may have about this RFA. We plan to record the webinars and make the recordings publicly available for interested applicants and or other interested parties who are not able to participate in the scheduled webinars.

We will post information about, and recordings of, these webinars on the following website. Please monitor this website for further detail on these webinars, including any date changes or additional dates that may be necessary. See www.epa.gov/puget-sound.

If you are interested in attending this webinar, please notify Sally Hanft at: Hanft.Sally@epa.gov so that we can gauge the level of interest and possible need for more than one webinar.

V. Application Review Information

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

A. Application Review Criteria

Only applications from eligible entities that meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion below. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application. Each application will be rated under a points system. A total of 100 points is possible. Eligible applications will be evaluated using the criteria listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria upon which eligible applications will be reviewed and ranked

Criterion	Description	Points
	Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they:	
Overall quality of application	Describe a coherent program responsive to this solicitation and demonstrate that the proposed activities, inputs/resources, tasks, and outputs will achieve desired outcomes, objectives and goals of this RFA, to implement Strategies 4 and 20 of the Puget Sound Action Agenda.	15
Organizational interest and alignment	Demonstrate that the organization supports and prioritizes the successful conduct of this program, and identifies mechanisms and structures to promote internal alignment and coordination in its Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead role. This includes the extent to which the applicant has formed a coalition to successfully approach this work.	5
Technical merit and	Demonstrate how they will make and manage subawards under the award: The extent and quality to which the application addresses	20

Criterion	Description	Points
	Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they:	
feasibility of the proposed approach	the "Make and Manage Subawards" objective described in I.C., - especially the extent and quality to which: 1) the subaward process will ensure that funded projects advance priority strategies (with a focus on Strategies 4 and 20) within the Action Agenda, 2) the applicant develops a successful approach to geographic prioritization of watersheds and reaches, and 3) how the proposed tasks and outputs will result in desired outcomes.	
Technical merit and feasibility of the proposed approach	Address the "Innovation and Partner Engagement" objective described in I.C., including the factors and considerations listed there; and how the proposed tasks and outputs will result in desired outcomes, including innovative models of landowner and partner engagement, and sustainable funding streams. This includes the extent to which the proposal leverages other funding sources, and builds on the work, successes, and lessons learned from previous efforts.	20
Technical merit and feasibility of the proposed approach	Address the "Manage the Cooperative Agreement" objective described in I.C., the factors and considerations listed there; and how the proposed tasks and outputs will result in desired outcomes.	10
Financial integrity, budget, and non-federal match	The proposal demonstrates the: (1) Adequacy of the budget information and whether it is reasonable to accomplish the proposed objectives, activities and meet project timelines (4 points). (2) complete budget information such that amounts indicated for task areas described in the narrative proposal are clearly identifiable and sufficient and reasonable to complete the proposed work and provides justification and/or explanations sufficient to support the costs included in different budget categories (4 points). (3) how required non-federal match will accounted for (4 points). (4) applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner (3 points).	15

Criterion	Description	Points
	Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they:	
Past performance and programmatic capability	Demonstrate their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, taking into account their 1. Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV. of the announcement (2.5 points). 2. History of Meeting the Reporting Requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV. of the announcement, 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 reports why not (2.5 points). 3. Organizational Experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project- particularly Strategies 4 and 20 of the Puget Sound Action Agenda (2.5 points). 4. Staff Expertise/Qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project (2.5 points). Note: In evaluating applicants under items 1 and 2 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 proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these sub-factors (items 1 and 2) 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.	10
Climate resilience and environmental justice	Explain how climate resilience and environmental justice considerations are reflected in the elements of their work plans. This includes addressing how projects supported under this program will achieve expected outcomes even as climate changes, will help protect human health and the environment and help	5

Criterion	Description	Points
	Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they:	
	communities and ecosystems become more sustainable and resilient to the effects of climate change, and increase decision makers' ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of a changing climate.	

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals will first be evaluated by EPA staff against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those proposals which meet all of the threshold factors and are deemed eligible will be evaluated by an EPA staff evaluation team using the evaluation criteria listed. Each eligible proposal will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered according to the numerical score. The staff evaluation team will make a recommendation to the EPA Region 10 selection official based on the rank-ordering.

In addition to the staff evaluation team recommendation, the selection official may consider other factors in making funding decisions. These other factors may include program balance, funding availability, and programmatic priorities.

VI. Award Administration Information

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

A. Award Notification

Following the evaluation-of proposals all applicants will be notified regarding their status. EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via e-mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal or the project contact listed in the proposal. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal 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 Regional Grants Management Official.

Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer 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 grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via email. The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement

A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: http://www2.epa.gov/grants.

C. Reporting Requirement

Semiannual reports and a detailed final report will be required. Semiannual reports summarizing progress, planned activities or changes to approved workplan for the reporting period and a summary of expenditures are required. The final report shall be completed within 120 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved, and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final report should discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of semiannual reports will be established by EPA, as a term and condition of the 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, 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. Riparian Buffers

EPA Region 10 anticipates that all new awards made under this solicitation will have a programmatic condition relating to riparian buffer projects. EPA Region 10 established the condition to ensure that Puget Sound Program funded buffer projects adhere to standards developed by NOAA to achieve water quality and salmon and tribal treaty resource recovery goals. In 2013 Puget Sound Lead Organizations agreed to use the condition, then in 2014 the programmatic condition was formally added to those awards.

The programmatic condition establishes that riparian buffer restoration projects in agricultural areas shall be consistent with the interim riparian buffer recommendations provided to EPA and the Natural Resource Conservation Service by National Marine Fisheries Service letters of

February 4, 2013 and April 9, 2013, or the October 28, 2013 guidance. Grantees shall confirm in writing projects' consistency with the recommendations referenced above. When developing project proposals, grantees also should consider the extent to which proposals include appropriate riparian buffers or otherwise address pollution sources on other water courses on the properties in the project area to support water quality and salmon recovery. Deviations can only be obtained through an exception approved by EPA. In order for EPA to evaluate a request for an exception, the grantee must submit the scientific rationale demonstrating adequacy of buffers for supporting water quality and salmon recovery. The request must summarize tribal input on the scientific rationale or other relevant issues. The scientific rationale could be developed from sources such as site-specific assessment data, salmon recovery plans, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and the state nonpoint plan. EPA will confer with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Washington Department of Ecology and provide the opportunity for affected tribes to consult with EPA before making a final decision on a deviation request.

F. Quality Assurance

Acceptable Quality Assurance documentation must be submitted to the EPA Project Officer within 30 days of the acceptance of this agreement or another date as negotiated with the EPA Project Officer. No work involving direct measurements or data generation, environmental modeling, compilation of data from literature or electronic media, and data supporting the design, construction, and operation of environmental technology shall be initiated under this project until the EPA Project Officer, in concert with the EPA Quality Assurance Manager, has approved the quality assurance document. Additional information on these requirements can be found at the EPA Office of Grants and Debarment website: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/assurance.htm.

Recipients must submit the quality assurance project plan (QAPP) to his/her EPA Project Officer and the EPA Project Officer forwards the new/revised QAPP to “R10 QA Support” via internal email group. The Region 10 Quality Assurance Team Contact is Cindy Fields at (206) 553-1893 or email: Fields.Cindy@epa.gov.

G. WQX Requirement

Recipients are required to institute standardized reporting requirements into their work plans and include such costs in their budgets. All water quality data generated in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan as a result of this assistance agreement, either directly or by subaward, will be required to be transmitted into the Water Quality Portal (WQP) using either WQX or WQX web. Water quality data appropriate for the Water Quality Portal (WQP) include physical, chemical, and biological sample results for water, sediment, and fish tissue. The data include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is the water data schema associated with the EPA, State and Tribal Exchange Network. Using the WQX schema partners map their database structure to the Water Quality Portal structure. WQX web

is a web-based tool to convert data into the WQX format for smaller data generators that are not direct partners on the Exchange Network. More information about WQX, WQX web, and the Water Quality Portal, including tutorials, can be found at https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data-wqx.

If activities submitted as match for this federal assistance agreement involve the generation of water quality data, the resulting information must be publicly accessible (in the Water Quality Portal or some other database). Recipients are encouraged to develop a cross walk between any non-WQX database utilized for the storage of water quality data associated with match activities and EPA's Water Quality Exchange (WQX).

VII. Agency Contacts

For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Melissa Whitaker
Region 10, Puget Sound Program
1200 6th Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, Washington 98101
E-mail address: Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail or email to the contact person listed above. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound.

VIII. Other Information

The following Terms and Conditions are important considerations for applicants applying to this funding opportunity. However, this list does not represent the entire suite of terms and conditions applicable to federal assistance agreements. See EPA Grant Terms and Conditions at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-terms-and-conditions.

A. Data Access and Information Release

In response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for research data relating to published research findings produced under a Federal award that were used by the Federal Government in developing an agency action that has the force and effect of law, the Federal awarding agency must request, and the non-Federal entity must provide, within a reasonable time, the research data so that they can be made available to the public through the procedures established under the FOIA. If the Federal awarding agency obtains the research data solely in response to a FOIA request, the Federal awarding agency may charge the requester a reasonable fee equaling the full incremental cost of obtaining the research data.

This fee should reflect costs incurred by the Federal agency and the non-Federal entity. This fee is in addition to any fees the Federal awarding agency may assess under the FOIA (5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(A)).

Appendix A. Measuring Environmental Results: Logic Models, Outputs, and Outcomes

Beginning in early 2005, EPA required that all assistance agreement recipients document outputs and "to the extent practicable" outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature, and in how they are measured.

OUTPUTS: Outputs are the activities or deliverables that are to be accomplished as a result of an assistance agreement grant. Outputs are generally described as deliverables or milestones in a work plan or timeline. EPA Project Officers track the completion of outputs to monitor the progress of an assistance agreement. Outputs include items like the number of workshops held, number of volunteers trained, field work completed, studies completed, watershed management plan completed, etc.

OUTCOMES: Outcomes are the measurable impacts or results of the work of the assistance agreement. While outputs are accomplished during the life of the assistance agreement, outcomes generally occur after the completion of the assistance agreement. It is useful to categorize outcomes as short, medium, and long-term. Measuring environmental outcomes can be challenging, especially for small assistance agreements.

Tracking medium and long-term outcomes can be costly, especially if monitoring, sampling and analysis are involved. In addition, it can take many years for the long-term impact of an assistance agreement to have a measurable effect on the environment. For small assistance agreements, we tend to focus on short and medium-term outcomes, however, the recipient should still attempt to state long term goals and objectives from the assistance agreement.

- Short-term outcomes may include changes such as increased knowledge or an active stewardship program.
- Medium-term outcomes may include documented widespread adoption of best management practices, documented reduction of pesticide use (E.g. 3 pounds of pesticides per acre no longer being used on 2000 acres).
- Long-term outcomes may include documented reduction of nutrients in a lake, documented reduction in number of children with asthma, documented improvement of indoor air quality, or meeting river water quality standards.

The following hypothetical examples include brief discussions of outputs and outcomes:

Example 1: For a project aimed at protecting a salmon run, expected outputs may include an ecosystem services valuation; a formal public review process for the valuation; and a systematic, multifaceted outreach effort to educate decision-makers on the results of the valuation and its recommendations. Other outputs of the proposed work could include implementation and completion of specific habitat restoration projects previously identified in an established salmon recovery plan or other local implementation plan, leading to a specific

number of acres of habitat restored, fish passage barriers removed, or the like. All of these products, or outputs, would be clearly identified as assistance agreement products and would be expected to be completed as part of the proposed work. The expected outcomes would include anticipated acres of key habitat protected or restored as a result of the valuation. Other outcomes would include supporting a healthy salmon run, maintaining water quality standards, delisting a water-body segment listed as impaired under CWA §303(d), or attaining a milestone under a Total Maximum Daily Load.

Example 2: A proposed project may be focused on protecting marine water quality and shellfish harvest areas. The anticipated outputs may be a local assessment program that systematically lists areas of known water quality and shellfish habitat problems, and systematically identifies appropriate/innovative technologies, development patterns, best management practices (BMPs), and other tools relevant to addressing these issues. The outputs would also include a report presenting the specific findings of the assessment. For example, such an assessment program could identify innovative household-scale septic systems as a tool for addressing nitrogen inputs to impaired estuarine waters; or innovative procedures to connect decisions regarding the location and use of septic systems to land use decisions and water quality requirements in sensitive areas. The proposed work may also include a plan for obtaining and documenting a formal technical review of the assessment by regionally recognized experts; for presenting and publicizing the assessment and its results; for taking public comment and revising the assessment; and for formally presenting it to key decision-making bodies. All of the previous outputs would be delivered during the project's period. Outcomes of this work would include reduced pollutants in surface waters and an upgrade in shellfish harvest areas.

LOGIC MODELS: Logic models are intended to help identify the range and sequence of actions necessary to attain a particular project result or outcome. They help line up and organize sequences of actions to achieve results. This is particularly relevant today as projects and implementation programs become more complex and multi-faceted and yet need to be communicated to and understood by many people. Logic models also help both project implementers and evaluators to view the whole system of actions and eventually to assess if the system is working as expected, or if not, why. In these ways logic tracks and result chains can help design, communicate, evaluate, track and adapt work programs.

Logic models and results chains are tools to be used to build better projects and programs. Accordingly, logic models come in many forms and shapes, from simple storylines that link various actions into strategies and work programs to more complex system diagrams. For a straight forward implementation project, perhaps the logic model is as simple as clearly documenting the history and basis for a particular project in a particular place to achieve a particular result. For a project with many tasks, work processes, timelines and partners, a more detailed approach may be more helpful.

With whatever logic model format you choose, please explain how the proposed work addresses the largest uncertainties or tests key hypotheses identified or embedded in the logic

models. We also encourage the identification of ecosystem endpoints or indicators that would be affected or supported by the products and information from the proposed investigation.

An example logic model, from an application for federal assistance for a Puget Sound Geographic Program solicitation submitted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, signed November 3, 2020, is provided in Figure A-1 on the following page.

Figure A-1. Example Logic Model, from an application for federal assistance for a Puget Sound Geographic Program solicitation, submitted by WDFW, signed November 3, 2020.

B. Environmental Results – Outcomes, Outputs, and Performance Measures

We describe in the logic model below the key outputs and activities, outcomes, and performance measures which will track the success of the integrated subaward and Implementation Strategy program. The short- and medium-term outcomes address the most immediate significant challenges for HSIL processes. The long-term outcomes support pressure source reductions, and other intermediate progress measures, that will ultimately lead to improving all Habitat Vital Sign indicators, as well as species and human wellbeing indicators.

Inputs		
	• EPA funding • WDFW and DNR HSIL staffing • State agency match • SIAT member time, approximately 15 individuals	• WDFW/DNR and external Subject Matter Expert time • Any subawardee match provided for projects • Results and experience of MNLO and HSIL work, leveraged knowledge from other LO/SIL work and Implementation Strategy Science Award

Outputs / Activities	Short-term outcomes	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes	Performance measures
HSIL – Subaward Process: Facilitating SIAT, RFP development, Proposal Evaluation				
SIAT charter and workplan	SIAT has clear directive and objectives for their work, leading to a productive process	SIAT-developed products and recommendations developed are well-vetted and transparent, representing the leading experts' views on advancing the Implementation Strategies using available resources to make progress on Vital Sign targets; Lessons learned inform adaptive management of RFP process	Progress toward Vital Sign targets leads to a healthier and more resilient Puget Sound socio-ecological system, including climate change and environmental justice issues	SIAT charter and workplan completed, and members endorse it, by May 2020
Meeting materials such as agendas, facilitation plans, and discussion draft	Productive and effectively facilitated meetings help the SIAT meet their objectives and timeline			Goal: 100% of SIAT members satisfied about process effectiveness and value.
Annual RFP solicitation	Predictable opportunity to develop proposals to implement priority areas for the Habitat recovery			HSIL consistently receives more proposals than funding available to evaluate
Annual proposal ranked list and funding recommendation	Rigorous proposal evaluation produces a strategic investment portfolio			Subawards span diverse geographies and eligible organization types
HSIL – Managing Subawards				
Subaward agreements finalized and under contract for workplan projects	Subaward sponsors to begin work on priority Implementation Strategy topics	Projects are successfully implemented, and issues addressed through contract monitoring	Progress toward Vital Sign targets leads to a healthier and more resilient Puget Sound socio-ecological system, including climate change and environmental justice issues	Goal: 100% of selected subawards contracted within 5 months of final funding recommendation.
Subawards produce valuable finalized deliverables	Projects are successfully implemented and subawardee organizations incorporate products into their best practices	Products are used to update Implementation Strategies and to inform the management system		By end of each project, 100% of planned deliverables are complete
Periodic and final progress reports such as FEATS	EPA has a clear understanding of subaward project progress	EPA and others in the region use project results to inform Puget Sound recovery	Well informed decisions lead to more robust recovery effort	100% of periodic and final progress reports completed by deadlines; Relevant progress measures are tracked

Outputs / Activities	Short-term outcomes	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes	Performance measures
HSIL – Operationalizing and Updating Implementation Strategies				
Annual evaluation and updates of Implementation Strategy products and tools as needed	As strategies are implemented results are incorporated into the strategy	Implementation Strategies have a robust adaptive management process that continues to improve recovery approaches	Progress toward Vital Sign targets leads to a healthier and more resilient Puget Sound socio-ecological system, including climate change and environmental justice issues	HSIL produces an annual assessment of each Implementation Strategy and updated products / complementary plans (e.g. Orca Task Force recommendations) as needed
HSIL annual work plan identifies focus areas for operationalizing the strategies	HSIL strategically engages with partners to advance Implementation Strategy priorities	Implementation Strategies are living documents valued by the recovery community to guide work		HSIL produces an annual plan to operationalize each Habitat SI and evaluates plan outcomes with EPA Project Officer
HSIL – Engaging with the Management Conference, Tribes, local partners				
Communication with LIOs and Management Conference (MC) Boards	MC is informed about progress of the HSIL, and HSIL priorities are informed by MC dialogue	geographically diverse participation in the process	Regional support for the work of the HSIL	Engage MC Boards at least twice annually, and LIO Coordinators at least quarterly
Communication with Tribal Management Conference (TMC) and TIL	TMC and TIL are informed about the progress of the HSIL, and HSIL priorities are informed by TMC dialogue	HSIL investments in habitat protection and restoration help ensure tribal treaty rights are fulfilled	Strengthened relationships between Tribes and HSIL accelerate progress	Engage Tribal Management Conference at least twice annually, and monthly engagement with the TIL
Maintained and updated website documenting subaward outcomes and SIL activities	Interested entities have access to up-to-date project information and results	Shared understanding of project results leads to better informed processes and decisions	Recovery investments are leveraged across the Puget Sound	Blog posts at regular intervals. Subaward outcomes available within a month of closeout
HSIL – Coordination and Integration on topics (Land use, marine water quality) and award management				
Materials and briefing updates for recovery coordination groups	Shared project results inform updates to Implementation Strategies and the Action Agenda	Puget Sound Action Agenda is a robust and effective path towards Puget Sound recovery	Progress toward Vital Sign targets leads to a healthier and more resilient Puget Sound socio-ecological system, including climate change and environmental justice issues	HSIL regularly attends all coordination forums as an active participant
Cross-SIL products that streamline subawards and administrative efforts	EPA funds are efficiently and effectively distributed to priority projects and coordinated opportunities leveraged	Highest priority projects are completed, focused on multi-benefits in advancing Puget Sound recovery		SILs develop a pre-RFP and pre-subaward coordination plan and identify specific cross-SIL products
Agreed upon software used to coordinate and update as appropriate (e.g. MiradiShare)	Shared project results inform updates to Implementation Strategies and the Action Agenda overall	Updated Implementation Strategies guide strategic and synergistic decisions	Puget Sound Action Agenda is a robust and effective path towards Puget Sound recovery	Updates provided at agreed upon intervals

Appendix B: Budget Information

Budget Detail
This section of the work plan is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A and must include a detailed discussion of how EPA funds will be used. Applicants must **itemize** costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Additional guidance for developing an applicant's budget is available in https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02- "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance." See https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02.

Applicants should use the following instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table to complete the Budget Detail section of the work plan.

- **Personnel — List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.**
  This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (generally, paid employees of the applicant organization). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the "Other" category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization's negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.
- **Fringe Benefits — Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included**.
  Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans.
- **Travel — Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-State and out-of-State, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.**
  Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g. inspections) or related to proposed project activities (e.g. attendance at meetings). Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the "Other" category.

- **Equipment — Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.**
  Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts. These types of proposed costs should be included in the "Other" category. Items with a unit cost of less than $5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project.
- **Supplies — "Supplies" means all tangible personal property other than "equipment."**
  The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the "Other" category.
- **Contractual — Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.**
  Contractual/consultant services are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the "Other" category. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known.
- **Other — List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.**
  This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance, rental/lease of equipment or supplies, equipment service or maintenance contracts, printing or photocopying, rebates, and subaward costs. Subawards (e.g., subgrants) are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term "subaward" means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient. This term does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work and a description of the types of activities to be supported. EPA's Subaward Policy and Supplemental Frequent Questions has detailed guidance available for differentiating between contracts and subawards — https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients.

- **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.**
  Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, the applicant must have a federal or state negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final, or provisional), or must have submitted an application to the cognizant federal or State agency. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:
    - ✓ Personnel (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs);
    - ✓ Personnel and Fringe (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs);
    - ✓ Total Direct Costs (Indirect Rate x Total direct costs = Indirect Costs); and
    - ✓ Direct Costs minus distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment (Indirect Rate x (total direct cost – distorting factors) = Indirect Costs).

Additional indirect cost guidance is available in RAIN-2018-G02 “Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients for EPA Assistance Agreements - https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g02

Note on Management Fees

When formulating budgets for applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant’s cognizant federal audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges cannot be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the work plan.

Appendix C: Workplan, Budget, and Staffing Plan Samples

Work Plan Sample:

Task One Budget Summary - All Years	
Federal	
Federal Indirect	
Federal Total	
Recipient	
Recipient Indirect	
Non-federal Match	
Recipient Total	
Task One Total	

Narrative Summary	This task provides… Task Duration: Work under this task will be ongoing for the duration of the project period, and staff support will be generally consistent across years. Accomplishments by end of Project Period: Reporting: Staffing Leads: Staffing: Key contributions to the staffing of this task include the following:
Description:	
Subtasks:	Subtask 1.a. Subtask 1.b. Subtask 1.c. Subtask 1.d. Subtask 1.e.
Specific Outputs	
Outcomes	
Puget Sound Action Agenda Links	2022 Action Agenda Strategy 4 2022 Action Agenda Strategy 20 2022 Action Agenda Implementation Strategies https://www.psp.wa.gov/implementation-strategies.php
EPA Puget Sound Measures Links	NEPORT Reporting of: Habitat Acres restored or permanently protected

	Leveraged Funding
Puget Sound Federal Task Force Action Plan Links	
Lead staff	

Subtask 1.a	**Title of Subtask**
Subtask Description	
Subtask Outputs with delivery dates	
Subtask key milestones	
Potential challenges	
Subtask staff lead	

Budget Narrative and Budget Tables Templates:

1. Include a budget narrative with the categories shown in the template below;
2. Include an overview budget that includes all five years of funding; and
3. Include a budget for each task and each year. For example, for 3 tasks and a 5-year budget period (i.e., five years of funding), 15 detailed budgets should be submitted in addition to the summary budget that includes all years of funding. Use the same template as for the overview budget.

Budget Narrative Sample

Cooperative Agreement

This is a seven-year cooperative agreement between the EPA and (primary recipient). Budget and work plan status are monitored through weekly consultations between the EPA project officer and SIL staff. Given the uncertainty of funding in Year Two through Five, this agreement recognizes that budgets will be received in increments with corresponding adjustments in work plan tasks and budgets.

All Tasks All Years	
Federal	
Federal Indirect	
Federal Total	
Recipient	
Recipient Indirect	
Non-federal Match	
Recipient Total	
TOTAL	

Award

This is an award of $5,000,000 in Year One with $5,000,000 anticipated each year in Years Two through Five for a total of $25,000,000 in federal funding. The (primary recipient) will provide the match at the required 50/50 rate for a total cooperative agreement of $50,000,000. The budget of this agreement occurs across (insert number of tasks here) tasks as described below followed by explanations of non-federal match and the indirect cost rate:

Task One:	
Task Two:	
Task Three:	
Indirect Costs:	
Non-federal Match:	
TOTAL:	$50,000,000

Non-Federal Match

The source of the (primary recipient's) non-federal match is the (fill in source(s) of match here).

Indirect Cost Rate
Indirect costs are based on (fill in Indirect Cost Rate)% of direct expenditures, less contracts, and subawards over $25,000 and is assessed annually.

Task One Indirect Costs All Years: **$X** (total) $X (federal); $X (non-federal)

Task Two Indirect Costs All Years: **$X** (total) $X (federal); $X (non-federal)

Task Three Indirect Costs All Years: **$X** (total) $X (federal); $X (non-federal)

Total Indirect Costs All Years: **$X** (total) $X (federal); $X (non-federal)

Personnel
The staffing plan for the award federal funds supports X FTEs at the (primary recipient and large partner subawardees included in the application). Match for the grant includes approximately X state funded FTEs at the (primary recipient and large partner subawardees included in the application). Personnel costs include a modest X% increase in Years X, Y, and Z.

Fringe Benefits
Scaled to actual salaries and include the cost of Medicare, medical aid, retirement, employee insurance, and (include other programs included).

Travel
Travel is a required component of this application. The application assumes various advisory groups to engage partners in our work and to monitor subawards. Costs include agency vehicles, mileage, meals, ferry fees, parking, and occasional overnight lodging ($X per FTE per year). Travel to conferences is also anticipated and estimated at $X. International travel is also anticipated for the purpose of (fill in purpose here) and is estimated at $X.

Supplies
They include basic office supplies used by all staff within the agency. Costs are allocated to fund sources based on an FTE methodology ($X per FTE per year).

Other
Includes communication and lease costs necessary to support agency staff. Costs are allocated to fund sources based on an FTE methodology. Communication includes telephones, cellular service, postage, and data lines ($X per FTE per year). Leases include building rent, utilities, and copier leases ($X per FTE per year). The Year One **subawards** in this application include agreements with (partner recipient in application) for $X (for all tasks) and (partner recipient in application) for $X (Tasks One and Two), and (partner recipient in application) $X (Tasks One and Two). **Provide additional narrative about funding of partners through subawards past Year One.**

Conference fees are also anticipated for several major conferences throughout the span of this award and those have been estimated at $X.

Details on Non-federal Match Sources
Includes specific information on the amount and source of non-federal match (if not already included).

Budget Table Example

	EPA Funding	Non-federal Match
Personnel		
EPA Grant Coordinator 1.0 FTE @ $80,000 a year		$ 80,000
Regional Manager .4 FTE @ $100,000 a year	$ 40,000	
Monitoring Analyst .6 FTE @$80,000 a year	$ 48,000	
Adaptive Systems Manager .6 FTE @90,000 a year	$ 54,000	
TOTAL PERSONNEL	**$ 142,000**	**$ 80,000**
Fringe Benefits (Break down for each employee)		
20% of Salary and Wages – Benefits include retirement, health benefits, FICA, etc.		
EPA Grant Manager – 20% x $80,000		$ 16,000
Regional Manager – 20% x $40,000	$ 8,000	
Monitoring Analyst – 20% x $48,000	$ 9,600	
Adaptive Systems Manager – 20% x $54,000	$ 10,800	
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	**$ 28,400**	**$ 16,000**
Travel		
Mileage: Travel for Regional Manager and 3 staff: 500 mi/month @$0.55 /mi x 12 months	$ 3,300	
Conferences: Travel to Vancouver, BC or Seattle, WA to attend the biennial Salish Sea Conference – hotel costs for regional manager and 3 staff – 4 nights @ $200 a night = $3,200 Per diem costs for the 4 staff – 4 days @ $150 a day = $2,400 Transportation by train from Seattle to Vancouver - $500 round trip for 4 employees = $2,000	$ 7,600	
TOTAL TRAVEL	**$ 10,900**	
Equipment		
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	**$ 0**	
Supplies		
Include basic office supplies used by all staff within the agency. Costs are allocated to fund sources based on an FTE methodology ($200 per FTE per year x 5 years of grant x 4 staff)	$ 4,000	
TOTAL SUPPLIES	**$ 4,000**	
Contractual		
Evaluation Contract	$ 40,000	
Support Services Contract	$ 20,000	
TOTAL CONTRACTUAL	**$ 60,000**	
Other		
Subawards to 3 organizations to help support the cooperative agreement ($500,000 for each)	$1,500,000	

State interagency agreement		$1,653,300
Registration Fees for 4 staff to attend the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference in 2022 (in Seattle) and 2024 (in Vancouver)- $500 x 4 employees x 2 conferences = $4,000	$ 4,000	
TOTAL OTHER	**$1,504,000**	**$1,653,300**
Indirect Charges		
Negotiated Rate at 25% (agreement attached)	$ 35,000	$ 35,000
TOTAL INDIRECT	**$ 35,000**	$ 35,000
TOTAL FUNDING	**$1,784,300**	**$1,784,300**

Staffing Plan Sample

Annual Staffing Plan Overview - SAMPLE FORMAT				
Staff Name	**Title**	**FTE supported by award**	**FTE supported by other funds**	**Total Level of Effort**
		Level of Effort		
Task 1:				
Employee Name	Monitoring Analyst	0.600		0.600
Employee Name	EPA Grant Coordinator		0.040	0.040
Employee Name	Adaptive Systems Manager	0.074	0.300	0.374
Employee Name	Regional Manager	0.350		0.350
Task 2:				
Employee Name	EPA Grant Coordinator		0.030	0.030
Employee Name	Adaptive Systems Manager	0.198	0.100	0.298
Employee Name	Program Director	0.090		0.090
Task 3:				
Employee Name	EPA Grant Coordinator		0.030	0.030
Employee Name	Adaptive Systems Manager	0.328		0.328
Employee Name	Regional Manager	0.040	0.010	0.050
Employee Name	Program Director	0.070		0.070
	Total FTE:	**1.75**	**0.51**	**2.26**