

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: “US-Mexico Border Environmental Education Program”

ACTION: Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP Number: EPA-OAR-IO-07-07

CFDA: 66.037

SUMMARY: Formal Agency responses to questions regarding the subject RFP

DATE: December 12, 2007

Q1: From the text, it is unclear to us if EPA is looking for more research emphasis or more teaching emphasis in this RFP, please clarify. From the “Outcome” and “Outputs” sections, we interpret this to have a more research focus as measured by peer-reviewed publications as well as outdoor and indoor air quality sections.

A1: The purpose of the “US-Mexico Border Environmental Education Program” is to educate students generally about outdoor and indoor air quality problems and solutions, with a more specific focus on the issues of the US/Mexico border region. Our goal is to provide an expanded pool of resources that students would be available to work on border air quality issues in the future. Research is an important mechanism that eligible entities can use in their proposals responding to our solicitation. It is up to each applicant to decide how research is incorporated into their proposal, and the associated curriculum, to achieve an effective balance of training and research. All EPA grants must result in outputs and outcomes that contribute to implementation of EPA's strategic plan.

Q2: In the solicitation on page 2, Section I, Part A, it states that “eligible students are citizens of the US, its territories, etc. It also states that “students who legally attend a US university...are not eligible participant.” Why would a Mexican student legally attending a US university not be allowed to participate in a project submitted for consideration? Isn't the RFP being represented as a US – Mexico Border Environmental Education Program? If the RFP is looking to improve conditions on the border, it should allow for Mexican participation. This would be in the spirit of the Border 2012 Program.

A2: We agree that effectively addressing air quality problems along the US/Mexican border will require coordinated efforts on both sides of the border. However, because this is a training program and not a research grant, EPA must follow our own regulations [40 CFR Part 35.135\(a\)](#) which requires participants in training programs to be either US citizens or permanent legal residents. EPA regulation [40 CFR Part 35.135\(a\)](#) states, “trainees must be citizens of the United States, its territories, or possessions, or lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence.”

Q3a: We understand that the participating students must be US citizens or permanent legal residents thus our Mexican students would not be able to participate in this program. Since we collaborate with Mexican institutions we were wondering if we could have subawards to Mexican institutions to ensure that US students can conduct part of their research work across the border in conjunction with our Mexican colleagues. Any limitations on such subawards?

Q3b: On page 9, Section IV. Part D, subawards are discussed. Would it be allowable to make a subaward to a Mexican University to assist with this project? This would benefit both countries, as it would allow for the sharing of data from both sides of the border.

A3: Eligible entities planning to make a subaward to a foreign entity will have to adhere to EPA's *Policy for Subawards Under EPA Assistance Agreements*, specifically, Section I, Part H (b) "EPA, must consent to proposed subawards where: 1) work will be performed in whole or in part in a foreign country by (a) U.S. subrecipient, (b) a foreign subrecipient, (c) an international subrecipient or 2) work will be performed in the US by a foreign recipient or international organization. (see link to policy below)

Also, under **EPA Order 4540.1(4) (a)**, EPA will have to seek preliminary clearance and approval of any proposed foreign subaward recipients. Since preliminary clearance of foreign subaward recipients is required, applicants will need to include foreign subawardees in their original proposal for preliminary clearance. Also, recipients of subawards must comply with federal procurement regulations for subawards, as stated in the solicitation on page 9, section IV, Parts D.

Please visit EPA's *Policy for Subawards Under EPA Assistance Agreements* for further guidance.

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/guide/subaward-policy-part-2.pdf>

Q5: The RFP states that \$1,250,000 will be awarded. Is this per year or over a period of five years?

A5: The funding is over a five-year period and one to two cooperative agreements will be awarded.

Q6: Will future solicitations similar to the "US-Mexico Border Environmental Education Program" RFP be announced in the near future?

A6: EPA's Office of Air and Radiation is unable to comment on future funding plans. Please periodically visit EPA's funding page for all current (headquarters) funding announcements and EPA regional funding pages for similar opportunities. Also, grants.gov is another source the public can use to find similar environmental education funding announcements.

http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html

Q7: In section IV Proposal and Submission Information, Part C.2 (a) (2), *A description of the associated work products to be developed*, seems repetitive. Applicants already have to address the intended outcomes and outputs in their proposal; do we still have to address *A description of the associated work products to be developed*?

A7: Applicants must address all 7 portions of the Project Summary/Approach located on page 8, Section IV, Part C.2 (a) (1-7). This is a required portion of the solicitation. Applicants must carefully read the entire solicitation, specifically, proposal content, threshold criteria and proposal evaluative criteria.

Q8: Are community colleges considered eligible entities?

A8: Yes, US community colleges located in the border area as defined in the solicitation are eligible entities.

Q9: The required 424A budget form on grants.gov only includes columns up to 4 years, but the solicitation calls for a 5 year budget. What do we do?

A9: Applicants may submit their **total budget \$** in the year 1 column and then again in the total \$ column, given that the standard federal budget form does not have columns which total for 5 years. However, in applicants' proposal, complete and detailed budgets should be submitted reflecting all the oar-io-07-07 solicitation instructions.