

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Agency: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

Title: "COST-EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS THROUGH ENERGY EFFICIENCY, CLEAN ENERGY, AND CORPORATE GREENHOUSE GAS MANAGEMENT."

Action: Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP No.: EPA-OAR-CPPD-08-04

Date: August 5, 2008

SUMMARY: Formal Agency responses to questions regarding the subject RFP

Question 1: How do I know if my project is eligible to apply under this solicitation?

Answer 1: Please refer to Section I.B for areas of interest. That being said, the areas of interest described in Section I.B. are not absolute requirements. However, applicants should note that proposals that address these areas may score higher during the evaluation process than proposals that do not address them.

Question 2: EPA is planning to award both grants and cooperative agreements- what's the difference? I assume the cooperative agreement would mean more day-to-day involvement with the agency. Does the applicant apply for the cooperative agreement specifically, or does EPA make that determination? If so, how does that work?

Answer 2: A cooperative agreement will entail substantial involvement from the EPA Project Officer. SAMPLE involvement may include but is not limited to the following activities:

Monthly telephone calls, emails or other meetings.

Planning discussions with the Project Officer before engaging in each of the major activities included in this project.

The EPA Project Officer will review all drafts of written materials which reference EPA program information going out to the public before printing/distribution.

The EPA Project Officer will review all completed project activities before approving subsequent project phases.

You may request a cooperative agreement at any level of funding. But the ultimate decision of which mode to use is at EPA's discretion. Furthermore, it is expected that cooperative agreements will be used for grants \$100,000 and greater. *Please note that CPPD does not consider recipient type as a notable factor for making the "grant" vs. "cooperative agreement" distinction.

Question 3: Are construction projects eligible to receive funds under this announcement?

Answer 3: The EPA will not be awarding construction grants under this solicitation. However, there might be other parts of your project that meet the scope of work interests identified in the RFP. Please review Section 1.B. to determine if your project meets the one or more of the area's of interest for this solicitation.

Question 4: How do I know if my organization is eligible?

Answer 4: Proposals will be accepted from States, local governments, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the United States, including the District of Columbia, international organizations, universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and other public or private nonprofit organizations.

Non-profit organization, as defined by OMB Circular A-122, located at 2 CFR Part 230, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization which: (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. For this purpose, the term "non-profit organization" excludes (i) colleges and universities; (ii) hospitals; (iii) state, local, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; and (iv) those non-profit organizations which are excluded from coverage of this part in accordance with § 230.20 (c).

Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to receive Federal grants.

Question 5: Will EPA fund under this solicitation the purchase of energy efficient equipment and products?

Answer 5: This solicitation is authorized under Clean Air Act 103, which allows for funding the following activities: conducting and promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, and control of air pollution. Therefore, under this solicitation allowable expenses must be related to research, investigations, demonstrations, surveys and/or studies and adhere to federal regulations 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31.

In addition, to be eligible for funding consideration, a project's focus must consist of activities within the statutory terms of EPA's financial assistance authorities; specifically, the statute listed above. Proposals that include project implementation will not be accepted. Generally, a project must address the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of air pollution. These activities should relate to the gathering or transferring of information or advancing the state of knowledge. Proposals should

emphasize this “learning” concept, as opposed to “fixing” an environmental problem via a well-established method.

Question 6: Is there someone at EPA willing to talk to me and tell me if my proposal is good?

Answer 6: The EPA makes maintaining the integrity of our competitive solicitations the highest priority. Consequently, we will not offer any preferential advice or consultation to prospective applicants. Question and Answers will be posted on this very website. However, we acknowledge that the Q & A's tend to be more general- and this is by design so that the information can be of benefit to the most possible range of applicants. Therefore, if you feel that a specific technology and/or technical component, and/or the very mission of your proposal has not been addressed, please resubmit your question- being very specific as to what answer you are seeking to cppd.grant-funding-inquiries@epa.gov.

Question 7: Can EPA provide examples of a previously funded proposal?

Answer 7: This is a new solicitation effort from the Climate Protection Partnership Division. Consequently, previously funded proposals do not exist for this solicitation.

Question 8: What organizations received grants from the most recent Climate Protection Partnerships competitive grant solicitation?

Answer 8: From the solicitation, "Market-Based Approaches to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Energy Efficiency in Homes and Buildings" RFP # EPA-OAR-CPPD-07-08, which closed August 30, 2007, the technical evaluation panel recommended grants to the following organizations:

- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Consortium for Energy Efficiency
- Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships
- Midwest Energy Alliance
- Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance
- New Buildings Institute, Inc.
- National Association of State Energy Officials
- City of Berkeley
- National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissions
- Association of State Energy Research & Technology Transfer Institutions
- Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management

While EPA has in the past made awards to the above entities, EPA-OAR-CPPD-08-04, represents an entirely new request for proposals.

Question 9: What if part of my project contains work that can be classified as Implementation?

Answer 9: To be eligible for funding consideration, a project's focus must consist of activities within the statutory terms of EPA's financial assistance authorities; specifically, Clean Air Act sec 103(b)3. These activities are limited to research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, training, outreach and studies. Proposals that include project implementation will not be accepted. Generally, a project must address the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of air pollution.

These activities should relate to the gathering or transferring of information or advancing the state of knowledge. Proposals should emphasize this "learning" concept, as opposed to "fixing" an environmental problem via a well-established method.

Question 10: Will existing grants be funded from this solicitation?

Answer 10: No. The estimated funding for this solicitation is intended to fund the resulting new awards.

Question 11: Can existing EPA grantees be eligible to apply for this solicitation?

Answer 11: Yes. All eligible entities may apply. See Section III.A and Q&A #4 above for more info.

Question 12: Is there a page limit for our proposal?

Answer 12: Yes. The Narrative Proposal (section 1-3 below) **may not** exceed a maximum of 20 single-spaced typewritten pages, including the Summary Page. Pages in excess of 20 will not be considered. Supporting materials, such as resumes and letters of support, can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 20-page limit. However, graphs, charts and tables that are part of the narrative would count towards the page limit.

Question 13: What type of budget information should a proposal include?

Answer 13: As stated in the RFP, proposals should include the SF-424A budget form which identifies the proposed costs for each budgetary category. In addition, your narrative should include a detailed budget, which describes and explains the proposed costs.

Question 14: I'm confused by the various references to "implementation". Can you please clarify?

Answer 14: To be eligible for funding consideration, a project's focus must consist of activities that are limited to research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, training, outreach and studies. **Proposals that include project implementation**

will not be accepted. Generally, a project must address the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of air pollution. These activities should relate to the gathering or transferring of information or advancing the state of knowledge. Proposals should emphasize this “learning” concept, as opposed to “fixing” an environmental problem via a well-established method. Proposals relating to other topics which are sometimes included within the term “environment” such as recreation, conservation, restoration, protection of wildlife habitats, etc., must describe the relationship of these topics to the statutory required purpose of pollution prevention and/or control. However, EPA recognizes that order to perform your grant, you would need to "implement"- meaning to "carry out" your project activities.

Question 15: If our proposal will be cost-shared, can the non-EPA portion contain Implementation activities?

Answer 15: No. Proposals that include project implementation will not be accepted. Since cost-shared proposals incorporate all costs into the project, the implementation costs would still be unallowable costs- even though paid for with non-EPA funds.

Question 16: Are creating informative websites eligible project activities?

Answer 16: Again, please refer to Section I.B to determine whether your project appropriately addresses the areas of interest for this solicitation. An informative website would be an allowable expense if the grant appropriately meets the qualifications described in Section I.B.

Question 17: Should my proposal be written specific to one group within the Climate Protection Partnership Division?

Answer 17: This is a judgment call for applicants. Some proposals might benefit from specifically targeting a certain group, while other proposals might benefit from demonstrating cross-cutting activities.

Question 18: If our grant proposal includes an outside sponsorship from another organization, should we discuss it in the narrative and/or submit a letter of support with our proposal?

Answer 18: You may discuss the non-EPA sponsorship in the narrative and you may also include a letter of support.

Question 19: If I can't download the application from grants.gov, where else can I find a copy?

Answer 19: You may try the following websites in addition to grants.gov:
http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html ,
<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm> or
<http://www.epa.gov/appdstar/fundingopp/fundingopp.htm> . However, please be advised

that in order to submit an electronic application, you must complete your application through grants.gov.

Question 20: When addressing Past Performance and Programmatic Capability (Sec III.C.2.c. p.11) in our proposal, is it better to demonstrate the previous work performed by the organization, or just that of the Principal Investigator?

Answer 20: A discussion of the previous Federal grant activity performed by your organization is required for this section. When evaluating the proposals, EPA will determine a *separate* score for staff expertise and qualifications (see Sec.V.A.- item #5).

Question 21: Under this solicitation, is EPA accepting applications for multi-year grants, both for the smaller grants and for the cooperative agreement?

Answer 21: Yes, regardless of dollar amount you may apply for multi-year grants.

Question 22: What's the maximum dollar amount we can request?

Answer 22: The maximum amount you may apply for would be \$250,000 per year. To clarify, the total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$6,000,000. EPA anticipates awarding 1-10 grants, ranging in **annual** value from \$40,000 to \$90,000, from this announcement. Additionally, EPA anticipates awarding 4-10 cooperative agreements, ranging in **annual** value from \$100,000 to \$250,000. Awards are subject to the availability of funds and quality of evaluated proposals. EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of original selection date. **8/1/08 update: EPA will make the final determination on whether projects are classified as grants or cooperative agreements. This assessment will take place after recommendations for funding have occurred.**

Question 23: Can one organization submit separate proposals for both the cooperative agreements and the grants?

Answer 23: Yes, your organization may submit multiple proposals of grants and/or cooperative agreements.

Question 24: Are grants that target the "farming community" eligible?

Answer 24: While the "farming community" was not identified in Section I.B, proposals that adequately meet the requirements of Section I.B., and the rest of solicitation, would be eligible for consideration.

Question 25: What should we put on the application for "congressional district" / SF-424 Item 16?

Answer 25: Box (a) is for the congressional district your organization is located. If your project will take place somewhere else, you can include that information in Box (b)

Question 26: I'm having trouble completing the grants.gov electronic application. Where can I find assistance?

Answer 26: You may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726.

Question 27: Referring to Section IV, in the discussion of the narrative requirements, what is meant by a "work product"?

Answer 27: When discussing your proposal, you should identify specific items that will be produced under the grant. A typical example would be a conference report following a conference paid for by grant funds.

Question 28: On page 15 of the RFP, under section VI (A.1.a.), it says, "The notification will advise the applicant that their Proposal has been successfully evaluated and recommended for award. The notices shall require submission of a Final Application." What would this Final Application" consist of?

Answer 28: If recommended for award, applicants would submit a Final Application. A Final Application is not bound by the length restrictions identified in the RFP Solicitation. Also, the Final Application would include any revisions to the narrative and/or budget. Furthermore, the Final Application should include all required certifications and documents required for EPA grants. May of these forms can be found at the following on the EPA Office of Grants and Debarment webpage.
<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>

Question 29: Are 501(c)(6) non-profits eligible to apply?

Answer 29: Yes. Please refer to Section III, Part A Eligible Entities for further information.

Question 30: I am currently employed at a consulting firm that works for the non-profit seeking the funds. As such we have been hired to represent the organization. Is the AOR required to be a direct employee of the non-profit, or could a representative of the consulting firm act as the AOR?

Answer 30: You may serve as the AOR if you have been designated by the Organization. Employment vs. Contractual arrangement is not a relevant factor for determining AOR status for grants.gov. Both roles are acceptable for AOR designation. The E-Biz POC, as defined by Grants.gov, must approve your AOR status. Please contact grants.gov with specific formatting questions.

Question 31: If our organization uses a consulting service to write our proposal, should we list the professional consultant's qualifications?

Answer 31: If the consultant was used solely to draft the proposal, their qualifications would not be required material for your proposal. However, mention of the consultant's qualifications is appropriate if you plan to work with the consultant on the actual project, should you be awarded a grant under this solicitation. Please be advised that consultant costs and other procurement activities must follow all appropriate OMB Circulars, Federal Regulations, EPA Orders and conditions of award.

Question 32: If we are awarded a grant, what would be the limit we could pay for consultants?

Answer 32: As of this writing 7/23/2008, the consultant cap is follows:

"Payment to consultants. EPA participation in the salary rate (excluding overhead) paid to individual consultants retained by recipients or by a recipient's contractors or subcontractors shall be limited to the maximum daily rate for a Level IV of the Executive Schedule (formerly GS-18), to be adjusted annually. This limit applies to consultation services of designated individuals with specialized skills who are paid at a daily or hourly rate. As of January 1, 2008, the limit is \$571.12 per day and \$71.39 per hour. This rate does not include transportation and subsistence costs for travel performed (the recipient will pay these in accordance with their normal travel reimbursement practices).

Sub agreements with firms for services which are awarded using the procurement requirements in 40 CFR 30 or 31, as applicable, are not affected by this limitation unless the terms of the contract provide the recipient with responsibility for the selection, direction, and control of the individuals who will be providing services under the contract at an hourly or daily rate of compensation. See 40 CFR 31.36(j) or 30.27(b)."

Question 33: Page #9 of the solicitation states "*Selected applicants will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency during application phase." Please explain what this means.

Answer 33: In order to bill Federal Grants for Fringe and Indirect Costs, recipients must have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with their cognizant Federal Agency. This process is common for universities and hospitals, but often less so for smaller and newer non-profits. You may still apply for this solicitation if you do not yet have an established indirect cost rate, however if selected, you will be required to begin the process of establishing one. In such a case, EPA would provide the instructions on how to get started.

Question 34: How do I know if my organization is subject to State review under Federal Executive Order 12372"?

Answer 34: Some States require review of Federal grant applications. You should check with your Governor's office to find out who the single point of contact is for filing this submission, as well as for all other relevant filing instructions.

Question 35: What is the Competition Identification Number for this solicitation?

Answer 35: EPA-OAR-CPPD-08-04

Question 36: How do I know if our organization is delinquent on any federal debt?

Answer 36: Your organization's senior controller or finance person should know the answer to this question. If the answer is yes, you must indicate accordingly on the proposal submission.

Question 37: Do I have to show annual salaries as part of the budget?

Answer 37: Yes. You should show annual salaries and percentage of time when demonstrating personnel costs. For instance, a Program Manager making \$50,000 per year and working on this project for 10% of his/her time should be demonstrated in the budget narrative as follows:

Personnel: 1 .1FTE Program Manager @ \$50,000/annual = \$5,000

Question 38: Will CPPD be offering this solicitation again in calendar year 2009?

Answer 38: At this time, CPPD cannot confirm what, if any, grant solicitations will be available in calendar year 2009.

Question 39: Are information-gathering surveys allowable activities under this solicitation?

Answer 39: Surveys, if appropriate and necessary for your project, can be allowed. However surveys require careful consideration of the Paperwork Reduction Act. When a cooperative agreement's scope of work includes the survey or collection of identical information from 10 or more persons, the Paperwork Reduction Act requires EPA to obtain Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance. Similarly, when a grant's scope of work includes the survey or collection of identical information from 10 or more persons and EPA wants to influence, design or develop the activities of the survey, then EPA must obtain OMB approval.

Question 40: We have proposal that would require us to purchase equipment in support of our study. Is that allowed?

Answer 40: The purchase of equipment is allowed. However, please be advised that "equipment" refers to items \$5,000 or greater and is subject to the appropriate Federal Regulations stipulated in 40 CFR 30.34. In addition, in the event you are awarded a grant, and have purchased equipment under that grant, you will be subject to the disposition terms and conditions set forth by EPA in the award document.

Question 41: On page 9, the last paragraph reads "In the "Application Filing Name" box, your AOR should enter your organization's name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g. FY08), and the grant category (e.g. Assoc Prog Supp)." Are we supposed to identify the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) or State Fiscal Year (SFY)?

Answer 41: We recommend using the Federal Fiscal Year the during which the solicitation posted on grants.gov- FY08.

Question 42: On page 9 of the RFP, the first sentence of the last paragraph refers to the "grant category." Where are these grant categories found in the RFP? Or, should we use categories like the ones found on Page 3, last paragraph, where it talks about activities like: research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, trainings, outreach and studies?

Answer 42: Section I.B., on page 3, identifies the appropriate categories of projects for the solicitation. And yes, any one of the above-mentioned categories are allowable options.

Question 43: If our organization is currently an EPA grantee, can we still apply for this grant opportunity.

Answer 43: Yes. Being a current EPA grantee, does not restrict you from applying for this grant opportunity.

Question 44: Where should we include proposed budgets from potential contractors, consultants, and/or sub-awardees?

Answer 44: This information should be provided with your project narrative. You may choose to incorporate these budget details directly into the narrative, or you can create an attachment/addendum/appendix to reflect contractor, consultant and/or sub-award budgets.

Question 45: Is it possible that EPA would partially fund our project?

Answer 45: At this time EPA cannot respond to specific questions about partially funding your proposal, because your proposal has not yet been submitted and evaluated. Please refer to Section II.B of the RFP for more information on partial funding.

Question 46: How will my proposal be evaluated?

Answer 46: Please refer to Section V of the RFP.

Question 47: Who will review my proposal?

Answer 47: In order to maintain the integrity of competitive selection process, the reviewer identities will remain confidential.

Question 48: Is there another place I can go to find EPA application forms?

Answer 48: If you're having difficulty on grants.gov and/or if the RFP is proving difficult, you can find Application materials at

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm> . **Please be advised that you do not need to complete all of these forms at the proposal stage. Please follow the submission instructions identified in the Section IV of the RFP.**

Question 49: As part of our program, as an incentive for youth participation, can we sponsor a contest that would offer scholarships?

Answer 49: Yes, you may offer a contest offering scholarships, pursuant to participant support costs OMB Cir. 122. However, please be advised that gaming restrictions vary by State, and prospective applicants should check with their respective gaming authorities and/or State controllers.

Question 50: Does the EPA have a preferred submission method (Grants.gov or hard copy)? Would the EPA object if we submit BOTH via Grants.gov AND hard copy submission (via DHL)? Are there penalties for submitting multiple copies of the same application?

Answer 50: You may submit via either method. There are no penalties associated with submission types. Submitting the same proposal in both formats is not recommended.

Question 51: It's after 4:00PM EST, and we can't submit our proposal by hand delivery, but we're having trouble with grants.gov. What should we do?

Answer 51: If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>

Question 52: What should we do if grants.gov just won't work for us, and we cannot submit an our proposal (and it's after 4:00PM on 8/6/2008)?

Answer 52: You should call grants.gov and try your best to submit the proposal properly- see above. If, you're still unsuccessful, hold onto your "case number" and call Kayla Roach Thursday, August 7, 2008.