

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: "NON-CONSTRUCTION MARKET-BASED APPROACHES TO REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS THROUGH ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN HOMES AND BUILDINGS"

ACTION: Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP: EPA-OAR-CPPD-10-12

CFDA: 66.034

SUMMARY: Formal Agency responses to questions regarding the subject RFP

DATE: October 27, 2010

Process and Legal Questions

Q1. Are applicants allowed to submit multiple proposals for this solicitation?

A1. Yes, applicants are allowed to submit multiple proposals. Applicants are asked to inform the EPA on how many proposals your organization will submit at the time of intent to apply.

Q2. Is "Non-Construction Market-Based Approaches to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emission through Energy Efficiency in Homes and Buildings the same announcement as Market-Based Approaches to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emission through Energy Efficiency in Homes and Buildings?"

A2. Both announcements are fundamentally the same. The EPA cancelled RFP EPA-OAR-CPPD-10-11 due to language changes needed. RFP EPA-OAR-CPPD-10-12 is the updated version with the corrected language.

Q3: How do I view the full announcement?

A3. You can see the full announcement by going to grants.gov and downloading the full announcement. You can also see the announcement on http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html

Q4. Have you solicited for proposals for this program in past years? How many proposals did you receive? How much funding did past recipients receive?

A4. Yes, the number and award amounts for the 13 projects awarded so far are as follows:

No. of proposals received: 64

Past Awardees:

Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Mgmt. - \$321,300

Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance - \$150,000

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, Inc.- \$490,000
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute -\$1,198,586
Natural Resources Defense Council- \$1,150,123
New Buildings Institute- \$180,000
Consortium for Energy Efficiency, Inc.- \$1,380,000
Nat'l Assoc. of Reg. Utility Comms.- \$224,997
Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance- \$180,000
City of Berkeley- \$115,000
Nat'l Assoc of Reg. Utility Comms.- \$299,934
Nat'l Assoc. of State Energy Officials- \$300,000
Association of State Energy Research and Tech Transfer Institute- \$90,000

Q5. How do I submit an application?

A5. As stated in the RFP in Section IV. Part B. Mode of Proposal Submission, applicants can submit an application electronically via grants.gov or by hardcopy.

Q6. Must the Cost Allocation Plan already be approved or can it be submitted to a federal cognizant agency? Do we need a negotiated indirect cost rate?

A6. Your federal cognizant agency would be the agency that has awarded you the most federal dollars. This is one way to create your indirect cost rate before being awarded. The term awarded also refers to being selected for funding from this RFP. It would be at the point of funding that an indirect cost rate would be needed. This RFP is not due to be funded until May or June of next year which would give time to create a rate if you started now. You only need a negotiated indirect cost rate if you are claiming indirect cost in your proposal.

Q7. Where exactly will the answers to these questions be posted?

A7. Questions will be posted on EPA's website at:
http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html , under the Office of Atmospheric Programs, under the heading "Non-Construction Market-Based Approaches to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Energy Efficiency in Homes and Buildings, RFP# EPA-OAR-CPPD-10-12.

UPDATED AS OF 10/27/10

Q8. Does the applicant have to have prior arrangements to work with the EPA Project Officer on Cooperative Agreements?

A8. No.

Q9. Is there any one within the EPA at a program or regional level that can act as a project officer whom we may contact in regards to the proposed project?

A9. As stated in section IV. Part H of the RFP, EPA will not provide technical assistance to applicants to assist them with their proposed project ideas..

H. Pre-Application Assistance and Communications

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposal packages, provide informal comments on draft narrative proposals, or provide advice and/or guidance to applicants on how to respond to ranking criterion. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, EPA will respond to questions in writing from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criterion, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

Q10. If I intend to collaborate with many people and organizations in this area, is there anyway to get in contact with other applicants that are focused on the same geographic area?

A10. Applicants are responsible for collaborating with one another to apply or partner for this funding opportunity. EPA will not assist in this effort.

Q11. Is the requirement to have an indirect cost rate going to be standard for federal grants or for EPA grants from now on?

A11. It is EPA's policy for a grantee to have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate if indirect costs are included in their budget.

Q12. Roughly how many letters of intent did the EPA receive for this grant?

A12. 50

Q13. How and where in the proposal do we "demonstrate the proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations"?

A13. Your contractor would have to meet the standards in the section for noncompetitive proposals. Generally, a sole-source justification or a cost-price analysis is given to explain why the contract was not competed.

<http://cfr.vlex.com/vid/31-36-procurement-19782673>

Q14. What is the desired funding/contract period? 1-yr? 3-yr? More?

A14. The project periods for these grants will be up to three years per RFP Sec. II D.

Q15. Why are federal contracts left out of the Programmatic Capability & Past Performance section?

A15. Federal contracts are managed differently than grants, thus they were excluded from the definition.

Q16. Is there a page limit or a particular template that should be used for a Curriculum Vitae?

A16. There is no page limit or standard template for a Curriculum Vitae.

Q17. Are we allowed to identify a specific for-profit business to partner with in our application and accept leveraged funds from the business outside of a formal procurement process to partner with said business?

A17. You may leverage funds from for-profit business in your proposal. For-profits cannot be listed as an applicant as they are an ineligible entity.

Q18. Where can we find the scoring criteria?

A18. The scoring criteria (evaluation) are located in the RFP Sec.IV V. A. Evaluation Criteria, pages 14-16.

Q19. Is there a way to locate information, abstracts, or the proposals so that the current effort can build on previous ones?

A19. Applicants (general public) have the option to submit a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to obtain specific information requests. For more details on submitting a FOIA request, please visit, <http://www.epa.gov/foia/>

Q20. With respect to Section IV Subsection C. number 4 Attachments on page 12 “are all of these documents required for purposes of meeting the threshold criteria, or are they optional attachments?”

A20. These attachments are optional and are not considered during the evaluation of an applicant’s proposal.

Q21. Is there an example of a negotiated indirect cost rate?

A21. Your Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate would be specific to your organization and you would have negotiated it through a federal agency. If you do currently have a cost rate it is not required. It is only required if you are seeking indirect cost in your proposal. Here is an example of indirect cost proposal format for non-profit organizations http://rates.psc.gov/fms/dca/np_exall2.html

Q22. Is there an example of a Quality Assurance Narrative?

A22. Quality Assurance is only needed if environmental programs include 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. Please see link for additional information. <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/assurance.htm>

Q23. Is there a limit on the number of letters of support?

A23. No

Q24. Is there a page limit on letters of support?

A24. No

Q25. When will the grants be awarded?

A25. As stated in the RFP Section II D. awards will be created in May, 2011.

Q26. What is the definition of cooperative agreement?

A26. An award of financial assistance that is used to enter into the same kind of relationship as a grant; and is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the federal agency and the recipient in carrying out the activity contemplated by the award.

Q27. If a collaborative proposal is submitted in the large grant range for \$300,000+ will it also be considered for partial funding under the RFP in the smaller award range of (\$60,000-\$180,000)?

A27. Yes, upon selection of proposals the EPA reserves the right to change funding amounts or partial fund projects.

Q28. For the Programmatic Capability and Past Performance section does it matter whether or not the current PI was involved in the past federally funded assistance agreements or does it relate more to the institution?

A28. No, the EPA will evaluate the programmatic capability and past performance of the institution or organization.

Eligible Applicants Questions

Q1. If a project's responsible institutions are a local government and a public university, who should be the applicant and who should be the subawardee?

A1. Both a local government and university are eligible entities for this funding opportunity. This is a decision that needs to be determined by the organizations interested in applying, not EPA.

Q2. Is my organization eligible for this program?

A2. See Section III. A. Eligible Entities of the RFP for more information.

Q3. Are foreign entities eligible?

A3. Yes. In order to be eligible you must meet the definition of eligible entities as defined in Section III.A. of the RFP.

UPDATED AS OF 10/27/10

Q3. If a project's responsible institutions are a local government and a public university, who should be the applicant and who should be the subawardee?

A3. Both a local government and university are eligible entities for this funding opportunity. This is a decision that needs to be determined by the organizations interested in applying, not EPA.

Project Questions

Q1. In developing market-based approaches, does a proposal need to identify combined heat and power (CHP) applications only or will other energy efficiency processes and technologies be considered?

A1. Proposals do not have to identify combined heat and power (CHP) applications, but they must address at least one of the objectives listed in Section I. Part B (Scope of Work) of the RFP. In order to be considered, proposals must also meet all of the Threshold Eligibility Criteria listed in Section III. Part C (Threshold Eligibility Criteria) of the RFP.

Q2. Please clarify the significance of "non-construction" in the wording.

A2. The EPA will not be awarding construction grants under this solicitation.

Q3. What constitutes a "large cooperative" grant?

A3. A cooperative agreement would include substantial EPA involvement as stated in Section II. Part E. Funding Type. For this RFP, the amount of funding an applicant applies for also determines whether a project is considered a cooperative agreement.

Q4. Our type of organization does not have state approved indirect cost rates. If we do not include any indirect costs, is it acceptable not to include an approved rate?

A4. If you are not seeking indirect cost recovery in your proposal, a rate is not needed.

Q5. The RFP reflects that it is for non-construction costs. Is it possible to use the grant to acquire a component for data analysis/presentation, even though it might be used in the final product of a construction project?

A5. EPA will not fund construction costs under this announcement. For fairness reasons, this restriction must stand for all materials/components that are acquired as part of the construction process. However, there might be other parts of your project that meet the scope of work interests identified in the RFP. Please review Section I. Part B of the RFP to determine if your project meets the one or more of the areas of interest for this solicitation; also review Section III. Part C to ensure that your project meets all of the threshold requirements.

Q6. Can energy audits be funded under this grant?

A6. Energy audits could be considered for funding if they are part of a project that demonstrates the potential to create a sustainable change in the market for energy efficient products, services, and best practices. Please review Section I. Part B of the RFP to help you further determine if your project meets the one or more of the areas of interest for this solicitation; also review Section III. Part C to ensure that your project meets all of the threshold requirements.

Q7. In the RFP one of the possible objectives that the proposed activities could address is "Improving energy performance in the residential and

commercial/government market through increased use of high-efficiency products.” Can you please provide an elaboration on what you mean by “high-efficiency products?” Specifically, would this cover things such as insulation and air sealing (the “product” or sealing mechanism plus the associated correct installation), which are typically not considered “equipment” but which, when installed correctly, provide excellent energy efficiency benefits?

A7. Section I. Part B of the RFP states, in part, that proposals must demonstrate the potential to create a sustainable change in the market for energy efficient products, services, and best practices, so the scope of work addresses more than efficient products alone. If your proposed project meets this criterion, please then review all the other requirements contained in Sections I. Part B and III. Part C of the RFP to ensure that your project is indeed eligible and meets all of the threshold requirements of the RFP.

Q8. When the RFP states ‘Proposed activities must address, but are not limited to, one or more of the following objectives,’ would an acceptable (but not listed) objective be “Improving energy performance in the residential and commercial/government market through increased use of holistic whole building design and retrofit measures”?

A8. We cannot advise on a specific concept, but please refer to the other requirements contained in Sections I. Part B and III. Part C of the RFP to guide you in developing your proposal objectives and help ensure that your project is indeed eligible and meets all of the threshold requirements of the RFP.

Q9. Can these dollars fund electric vehicle charging stations at residences and commercial enterprises?

A9. Electric vehicle charging stations would be an allowable activity, provided a GHG reduction can be calculated and assuming that the proposal is fully responsive to the RFP.

Q10. Does renewable energy fit in the criteria for this RFP?

A10. Renewable energy would be an allowable activity, provided a GHG reduction can be calculated and assuming that the proposal is fully responsive to the RFP.

UPDATED AS OF 10/27/10

Q11. What residential CHP technologies is EPA trying to promote? Are there best climates for these technologies?

A11. The following link may provide some additional information:

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=pt_awards.pt_emerging_technologies

Q12. Would a pilot rebate program for a new technology qualify for grant funding as part of an “activity to increase purchase of energy efficiency products”; an “implementation activity” or a “demonstration project?”

A12. Section I. Part B of the RFP states, in part, that proposals must demonstrate the potential to create a sustainable change in the market for energy efficient products, services, and best practices. Further, Section I. Part D states, in part: "Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project."

If your proposed project meets the above description, please then review all the other requirements contained in Sections I. Part B and III. Part C of the RFP to ensure that your project is indeed eligible and meets all of the threshold requirements of the RFP.

Q13. Could the equipment part of my project be funded through this RFP?

A13. For this funding opportunity, equipment costs have a specific definition 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 40 CFR 31.3 and 30.2.

If you are looking at the project equipment costs in the context of something you want to build because you want the services the end result will provide, then the equipment costs would not be allowable. However, if you seek to build something as a demonstration project, then those equipment costs could be considered for funding. The definition of demonstration projects is in Section I. Part D of the RFP which states, in part: "Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project."

Q14. Would solar panels be considered an "energy efficient" product?

A14. Solar Panels would be considered a renewable energy technology. A project involving renewable energy technology would be an allowable activity, provided a GHG reduction can be calculated and assuming that the proposal is fully responsive to the RFP.

Q15. Is there a preferred geographical focus, i.e., local, regional and/or state level work?

A15: There is no preferred geographical focus. However, projects must demonstrate the potential to create a sustainable change in the national and/or global market for energy efficient products, services, and best practices regardless of location or geographical focus (i.e. local, regional or state level work). Please review Section I. Part B of the RFP to help you further determine if your project meets the one or more of the areas of interest for this solicitation; also review Section III. Part C to ensure that your project meets all of the threshold requirements.

Q16. Would the installation of heat-exchange equipment and modification of a facility's operating space be considered ineligible?

A16. Construction-related costs will not be funded 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 I. Part B of the RFP to determine if your project meets the one or more of the areas of interest for this solicitation; also review Section III. Part C to ensure that your project meets all of the threshold requirements.

Q17. Please clarify the intent of the scope of work for RFP No. EPA-OAR-CPPD-10-12. The crucial language, "fostering information exchange on policies" in the context of the paragraph appears to suggest that this RFP wants research and guidance on policy, or possibly an ongoing website or set of conferences to promote information exchange. However, the rest of the RFP seems to suggest the performance of actual projects. Could you please clarify, and possibly suggest some example projects that would be considered responsive to this RFP?

A17. In response to your question, EPA seeks proposals from eligible entities to advance national, regional, state, and local energy efficiency programming by utilizing market-based approaches to program design and delivery by fostering information exchange on policies that are supportive of these approaches. Proposals must demonstrate the potential to create a sustainable change in the market for energy efficient products, services, and best practices. Within this context, proposed activities must address, but are not limited to, one or more of the objectives listed in Section 1B of the RFP. Please review this section as well as Section IIIC of the RFP to ensure that your project concept will indeed be eligible and meet all of the threshold requirements of the RFP. Unfortunately, we cannot advise on specific concepts, but we hope this provides the necessary clarification.

Q18. Will "Non-Construction Market-Based Approaches to reduce Green House Gas Emissions through Energy Efficiency" grant include funds for energy efficiency training, i.e., blower-door test training, HERS rater certification, weatherizing homes and businesses, or class instructors?

A18. EPA seeks proposals from eligible entities to advance national, regional, state, and local energy efficiency programming by utilizing market-based approaches to program design and delivery by fostering information exchange on policies that are supportive of these approaches. Proposals must demonstrate the potential to create a sustainable change in the market for energy efficient products, services, and best practices. Within this context, proposed activities must address, but are not limited to, at least one of the objectives listed in Section 1B of the RFP. Please also review Section IIIC of the RFP to ensure that your project concept will meet all of the threshold requirements of the RFP.

Q19. Are there other grants at EPA that could fund a project such as this? (Above question)

A19. A comprehensive list of funding opportunities offered by the government is maintained at www.grants.gov

Q20. Would programs that focus only on the residential sector fit with the intent of the funding announcement?

A20. Yes, the EPA will allow residential or commercial/government market improvements in energy performance.

Q21. Would you please clarify which of the very different goals are intended by this RFP?

A21. The EPA is looking for projects that meet one or more of the objectives listed in Sec I B of the RFP.

Q22. Can a small rebate program be instituted with funds from this grant opportunity?

A22. Rebates themselves will not be funded under this grant opportunity. However, other aspects of your proposal might be eligible, if it demonstrates the potential to create a sustainable change in the market for energy efficient products, services, and best practices. If non-rebate elements of your proposed project meet the above description, please then review all the other requirements contained in Sections I. Part B and III. Part C of the RFP to ensure that your project is indeed eligible and meets all of the threshold requirements of the RFP.

Q23. On CHP, is there a preference for existing or new buildings?

A23. No, it will be based on the quality of the proposal.

Q24. Can partial roof removal followed by replacement be considered exempt from the definition of 'construction activity'?

A24. If you are looking at the project in the context of something you want to build because you want the services the end result will provide, then these costs would not be allowable. However, if you seek to build something as a demonstration project, then those equipment costs could be considered for funding. The definition of demonstration projects is in Section I. Part D of the RFP which states, in part: "Demonstrations must involve new or experimental

technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project."

Q25. How should we plan the budget if we can be sure which funding designation the project will fit within? Is it more reasonable to ask for the funding that is needed rather than the funding that is available?

A25. You should plan your project with the budget you feel is required to successfully complete it. EPA will determine funding types and funding amounts upon selection of projects for funding.

Q26. As it pertains to CHP "what energy performance measurement and rating systems are you referring to, and how would that work?

A26. The EPA is looking for new and innovative ways of evaluating performance measures and upgrading existing measures/rating systems in place. This portion of the RFP was created to stimulate fresh ideas in the area of performance measures and rating systems.