

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Informational webinar for EPA STAR RFA on “Air Pollution Monitoring for Communities”

We will begin at
approximately

2 PM ET
11 AM PT

*Please use your computer’s speakers for audio.
All questions should be submitted through the
“Q&A” box.*

*If computer audio is not an option for you, you may call this limited-
capacity conference line:*

866 299 3188

Conference code: 703 347 8109

*Remember to keep your phone muted for the **entire** webinar.*

Air Pollution Monitoring for Communities Request for Applications (RFA)

<http://www.epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2014/2014-star-air-pollution-monitoring.html>

- Or visit www.epa.gov/ncer and click on “Funding Opportunities”

Outline

- Overview of RFA and **Research** Areas
- Peer Review Criteria
- Programmatic Review Considerations
- Tips for Grants.gov
- Questions & Answers

Air Pollution Monitoring for Communities RFA

Solicits research on empowering communities and individuals to take action to avoid air pollution exposure, using low-cost portable air pollution sensors. Specifically of interest is research on using low-cost portable sensors to understand and avoid air pollution exposure, on the ways communities and individuals interact with air pollution sensors and their data, on methods for understanding and managing the quality of data from air pollution sensors, and on how sensors and sensor networks compare to existing state-of-the-art air quality monitoring methods.

- “This RFA encourages **collaboration** among universities; non-profit organizations; state, tribal, and local agencies; and communities to propose and conduct air pollution monitoring studies relevant to community needs.”
- Approximately **six** awards
- Up to \$750,000 per grant
- Closing date: October 7, 2014 (11:59:59 PM ET)

Applications should address two or more of the research topics (See RFA Section I.D)

1. How can low-cost portable air pollution sensors be used by communities to understand and reduce the pollutant concentrations to which they are exposed, in outdoor and/or indoor environments? This could include “criteria” air pollutants ([Six Common Air Pollutants](#)) or air toxics ([About Air Toxics](#)).

Applications should address two or more of the research topics (See RFA Section I.D)

2. How do communities and individuals interact with low-cost portable air pollution sensors? What are effective distribution methodologies, training programs, design features, data products, etc., that maximize the value of sensors and their outputs for communities? What are effective methods for sharing and disseminating the information from low-cost portable air pollution sensors? How can such methods be evaluated for effectiveness in helping communities understand their exposure environment?

Applications should address two or more of the research topics (See RFA Section I.D)

3. What are effective methods for understanding, quantifying, or managing data quality from these sensors? How do measurement accuracy and measurement precision from these sensors compare to the accuracy and precision of existing traditional measurement methods? How well do sensors perform after sustained real-world use by communities?

Applications should address two or more of the research topics (See RFA Section I.D)

4. What additional information about the spatiotemporal patterns of air pollution can be gained by the use of sensors, beyond that which can be known from existing monitoring networks? How does the spatiotemporal coverage or chemical species coverage enabled by portable sensors compare to that of existing monitoring methods? Such a comparison could include spatial variability of portable monitor readings relative to fixed-site monitor concentrations, concentration ratios, daily and seasonal variations in concentrations and ratios, frequency and location of elevated values, or other aspects of local-central variation.

Major technical components of application

- See full RFA for full list of requirements and more information.
- Research plan (up to 15 pages)
- *Community engagement and communications plan* (5 pp.)
- Quality assurance (QA) statement (3 pp.)
- Human subjects research statement (6 pp.)
- Data plan (2 pp.)

Community engagement and communications plan

Active partnerships with community organizations are strongly encouraged. This plan should make evident the project's relevance for communities and its potential for empowering communities and individuals to take action to reduce pollution exposure. Some illustrative examples:

Engagement

- Including community groups in project plan
- Budgeting subawards to community groups
- Workshops
- Advisory board

Communications

- Analyzing and sharing data with community
- Project website
- Public events
- Sharing data with local public health or environmental agencies

Human subjects

- Extensive (6-page) human subjects research statement
- More detail in RFA
- www.epa.gov/osa/phre/policy.htm
- Special considerations and exclusions for sensitive populations (40 CFR 26)

Application Peer Review: RFA Section V.A (descending importance)

1. Research Proposal
2. Investigators
3. Responsiveness
4. Community Engagement and Communications Plan
5. Project Management
6. Facilities and Equipment
7. Budget

Program Relevancy Review: RFA

Section V.B

- Proposals with Excellent or Very Good peer review scores receive internal EPA review
- Connections to EPA research priorities
- Principal Investigator (PI) requested to provide info on past performance and reporting history for prior & current grantors for last 3 years, of similar size and scope:
 - Level of success in managing and completing each agreement
 - History of meeting reporting requirements under each agreement

Helpful Reminders for Electronic Submitters using Grants.gov

Electronic Submissions

- Get your Grants.gov account early
- DUNS and SAM Registration (is registration active?)
- Check all the application content before you “Save and Submit”
- Plan to submit ahead of the deadline (a day or two early)
- Don’t wait until the last minute

Helpful Reminders for Electronic Submitters using Grants.gov

Problem Solving

- Forgot a section or found an error -> resubmit
- Problems: Adobe software versions and Zip Codes
 - Call the Help Desk, get an incident number!
 - 1-800-518-4726
 - Write an email and explain issues with submitting an application, but no later than 5pm Eastern Time the day after close

Questions?

- Eligibility Contact: Ron Josephson
 - Email: josephson.ron@epa.gov
 - Phone: (703) 308-0442
- Electronic Submissions: Todd Peterson
 - Email: peterston.todd@epa.gov
 - Phone: (703) 308-7224
- Technical Contact: Sherri Hunt
 - Email: hunt.sherri@epa.gov
 - Phone: (703) 347-8042

Questions & Answers: Applications and Eligibility Concerns

Questions & Answers

- **Applicant Eligibility, See RFA Section III**
 - Public nonprofit institutions/organizations (includes public institutions of higher education and hospitals) and private nonprofit institutions/organizations (includes private institutions of higher education and hospitals) located in the U.S., state and local governments, Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments, and U.S. territories or possessions are eligible to apply.
- **Subawards and Subcontracts, See the Following Link:**
- **http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm#Contracts_subawards**

Questions & Answers

- **What is the role of subawards and subcontracts?**
- RFA Section IV.B.6.a says “Applicants may not use subagreements to transfer or delegate their responsibility for successful completion of their EPA assistance agreement. Therefore, EPA expects that subawards or subcontracts should not constitute more than 40% of the total direct cost of the total project budget. If a subaward/subcontract constitutes more than 40% of the total direct cost, additional justification may be required before award, discussing the need for the subaward/subcontract to accomplish the objectives of the research project. Please refer to [Contracts and Subawards](#) if your organization intends to identify specific contractors, including consultants, and subawardees in your proposal.”

Questions & Answers

- **Can non-U.S. institutions be participants?**
- **Can large or small businesses be participants in the proposed Centers?**
- Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive assistance agreements from the EPA under this program (RFA Section III.A). However, business may be eligible as subcontractors.
- http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm#Contracts_subawards

Questions & Answers

- **Can an institution submit multiple proposals with different PI and teams?**

Yes, but the work proposed in each application should not be the same.

Questions & Answers

- **Is a letter of intent required?**

- The applicant institution may enter into an agreement with a Federal Agency to purchase or utilize unique supplies or services unavailable in the private sector to the extent authorized by law. Examples are purchase of satellite data, chemical reference standards, analyses, or use of instrumentation or other facilities not available elsewhere. A written justification for federal involvement must be included in the application. In addition, **an appropriate form of assurance that documents the commitment, such as a letter of intent from the Federal Agency involved, should be included.**
- RFA Section IV.B.9.a gives details on how letters of intent for partner organizations should be structured and submitted, but does not list any requirement that they be present.

Questions & Answers: Technical Content

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