

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**NCEI State Innovation Grant (SIG)
FY2010 Pre-competition Meeting Summary**

This meeting summary contains two components of the pre-competition sessions, including: 1) the date, EPA Region, and States that participated, and 2) a compilation of the questions that were asked during these sessions.

Thursday, May 28, 2009, Participants:

EPA Headquarters	EPA Region 8	Colorado
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Tuesday, June 2, 2009, Participants:

EPA Headquarters	EPA Region 5	Minnesota
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Wednesday, June 3, 2009, Participants:

EPA Headquarters	EPA Region 5	New Jersey
California	Michigan	

Thursday, June 4, 2009, Participants:

EPA Headquarters	EPA Region 2	EPA Region 3
Delaware	New Jersey	Pennsylvania

Tuesday, June 9, 2009, Participants:

EPA Headquarters	Region 7	California
Rhode Island	Georgia	Indiana
Montana	North Carolina	South Carolina
Tennessee		

Wednesday, June 10, 2009 Participants:

EPA Headquarters		

Tuesday, June 22, 2009 Participants:

EPA Headquarters		

Wednesday, June 24, 2009 Participants:

EPA Headquarters		

General Agenda:

- I. Introductions
- II. General Overview
- III. Questions and Answers
- IV. Meeting Wrap-up

Questions and Answers (Q&A):

The Q&As are organized in broad categories (theme or possible subject areas, team approaches, eligibility, policy on environmental results, policy on sub-contracting, general) and then topically according to the words in bold.

THEME OR POSSIBLE SUBJECT AREAS

Q1: Can the grant be used for the advancement of a database or **datasystem**?

A1: Early on in the program we made a decision to steer away from this area. Other sources of funding for IT projects exist and generally, information technology innovation does not support our programmatic goals for innovation. From an experience early on with a project that was otherwise quite successful, we found that data and information systems innovations are not easily transferable to other states due to incompatibility across states with software, database architecture and hardware. We also ran into problems with supporting development of software and databases with copyrights and rights-in-data that does not support one of our primary goals of transferability

Q2: Can the grant be used toward **staffing a program**? Providing salaries?

A2: Yes, we encourage capacity-building within states. In fact, many programs that have been funded over the course of the State Innovation Grant program have allocated funds towards paying staff. However, the grant will not be used to aid any existing programs or in the expanding of an existing program because we, National Center for Environmental Innovation, are looking for new and innovative approaches.

Q3: Is the competition open to **water projects**?

A3: The Office of Water has various grant opportunities that are specific to water projects. Historically, this competition has targeted primarily multimedia projects (ex. integration of air, water, waste and toxics management) or projects that test innovative tools for permit compliance (ex. Not addressed in existing regulations or policy, and no known or few piloted demonstrations)

- Q4: Is the discussion during these informational sessions limited to questions only on the existing State Innovation Grant program framework, or may we ask questions related to potential **new topic areas** not explored before?
- Q4: While we will try to address any question during these informational sessions, we will not be able to say outright if a new topic area would be an acceptable alternative in this competition. Ideas suggested here will need to be vetted with NCEI. If a state is proposing a new topic area that is significantly different from prior years, it would be helpful to EPA if the interested party could provide feedback to the agency through written comment. The comment should identify the topic area of a suggested innovation and describe how the project will help address regional or national environmental priorities. State Agencies are asked to send an e-mail describing their area of interest to the State Innovation Grant program so the staff can determine whether it could fit in with the program.
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- Q5: Over the years this program has always been focused on permitting. In some cases states are trying to address problems beyond permitting issues and focus on sustainability matters (e.g., lean, lean for institutions and non-manufacturing businesses, water quantity, infrastructure and energy sustainability, air quality, and bio-fuels) Is it possible to take a State Innovation Grant beyond permit compliance if the state sees a different area for improvement **outside the realm of permitting**?
- A5: The State Innovation Grant program has been focused strategically in promoting innovation in permitting, which was an area identified initially in the program by states and the Agency's Innovation Action Council. The purpose of these calls is to listen to state input and to determine if other topic areas of widespread interest are emerging that might otherwise satisfy NCEI's strategic interests in sound testing and transferability of innovation aimed at promoting measurably better environmental performance and stewardship.
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TEAM APPROACHES

- Q6: Can we submit a **team proposal**?
- A6: Yes, we encourage potential applicants to initiate discussions with neighboring states within the same region, regional and local government and non government organizations, other state agencies and academic institutions within the same state, and other states or organizations interested in the same business sector. EPA will accept one team proposal in addition to an individual state proposal from eligible applicants.

States are encouraged to partner with other states and American Indian tribes to address cross-boundary issues, to encourage collaborative environmental

partnering within industrial sectors or in certain topical areas (e.g., agriculture), and to create networks for peer-mentoring. Agencies are also encouraged to partner with other governmental agencies or non-governmental organizations within the State (or outside of their state) that have complementary environmental mandates or symbiotic interests (e.g., energy, agriculture, natural resources management, transportation, public health). One award will be made per project, so the proposal would need to identify one eligible applicant to receive the award.

- Q7: Does a group with delegated authority have to apply for the grant through the state agency and have the state as a team member, or can this group apply as an individual applicant?
- A7: For the last few years, with a focus on innovation in permitting programs we've allowed the agency with delegated authority to submit a pre-proposal directly to EPA. We did stipulate that the agency with the primary delegation in the state should be a partner on the proposal team.
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ELIGIBILITY

- Q8: Can **anyone** submit a proposal?
- A8: No. As we've described in the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA 66.940) announcement for the program, we will be accepting pre-proposals only from eligible applicants, which are the state environmental agencies with the primary delegations from EPA for environmental permitting programs or from an agency in a state with a re-delegated permitting authority from the primary state agency (e.g., a regional water or air quality management board).. Historically, NCEI has accepted only one individual pre-proposal from a state and one teaming proposal, and if this restriction continues, which we think it will, it will be essential that state agencies coordinate their efforts prior to submittal of an individual pre-proposal. Only one award will be made per project, so the pre-proposal would need to identify one eligible applicant to receive the award.
- Q9: Does it impact a state's eligibility for a grant if there is currently an **ongoing State Innovation Grant project** in that state?
- A9: No.
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EPA POLICY ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

Q10: What is EPA's policy on **environmental results**?

A10: The agency's obligation is to ensure that work funded through our assistance agreements furthers EPA's mission and achieves environmental benefits for the taxpayer. EPA Order 5700.7 requires EPA to demonstrate environmental results for assistance agreements that have been issued. Recipients will be required to address the requirement established in the EPA Order to demonstrate and document environmental results. This policy includes provisions to improve accountability for environmental programs and performance at three key stages of the assistance process: Competitive Funding Announcements, Work Plan Development (containing anticipated outputs & outcomes), and Performance Reporting. A copy of EPA's Policy on Environmental Results may be found at www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/.

Q11: Is it an issue if a state cannot necessarily quantify **project measurements until after the grant period is over**?

A11: EPA recognizes that some projects may not be able to demonstrate improvements to the environment (third order outcomes) during the grant period; however, we believe that applicants can identify metrics for primary outcomes (changes in attitude or knowledge), or secondary outcomes reflecting changes in behavior (e.g., improved compliance rates) that may work well as surrogates for the third order outcomes. In these cases, project proposals will be judged of superior quality if the states provide a commitment to monitor the progress of the project even after over the grant project is complete. We hope that states would continue to provide information to EPA on outcomes beyond the grant period.

GENERAL

Q12: What is meant by **multimedia**?

A12: Cross Media proposals that include more than one environmental media program, (i.e. air, water, toxics and waste), are considered to be multimedia. We place an emphasis on funding projects that can ultimately provide more integrated and cost-effective approaches to improved environmental management.

Q13: What is meant by **transferability**?

A13: Transferability in this sense refers to the applicability and feasibility of multiple states adapting or adopting an innovative approach demonstrated under this grant

program. As a national program, we have a strategic goal of getting the broadest utility out of a demonstration supported under the grant program.

Q14: When will the **solicitation** be released?

A14: The projected date for the publication of the solicitation is September 2009. We expect that the competition will be open for 60 days, closing prior to the onset of the winter holidays. We will strive to provide the most up-to-date information regarding publication of the solicitation on our State Innovation Grant website. In addition, an e-mail will be sent out to all EPA Regions and States (point-of-contact) notifying them about the release of the solicitation.

The official notice will be posted on <http://fedgrants.gov>, and a copy of the solicitation will also be available on <http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants>.

Q15: Can you give a time frame for **open discussion** between potential applicants and EPA?

A15: Until the time of publication of the solicitation (official competition), EPA will be able to discuss and offer general guidance on any question or issues you may have.

Q16: If a state **missed the call** on the day that was designated for its region, can it participate in a call on another day?

A16: If you were unable to participate on a previously scheduled call with other States in your geographic area and EPA Region, you are welcome to participate in any of our other calls. The schedule for those upcoming calls is posted on our website at www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/. All calls are on Eastern Time. For the benefit of those who miss the call(s), we will be posting all questions and answers from our pre-competition informational calls on our website <http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/>.

The call-in number and access code for the remainder of our conference calls is:
Call-in No. 1-866-299-3188, Conference Code (519) 584-6853

Q17: What is the range for the **amount of grant money** given?

A17: It ranges between 50 and 375K per program. Depending on budgeting and the number of projects we take on greatly contributes to the amount of money available to each project.
