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Questions and Answers for 2013 NPIC Request for Applications

**Office of Pesticide Programs
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

Question and Answers for 2013 NPIC Request for Applications

Updated 9/25/13

These responses are specific to the RFA titled:

National Pesticide Information Center, Funding Opportunity Number EPA-OPP-13-003

1. Have corrections been made to this RFA since the initial publication?

Yes. Amendments were made and posted on 8/21/13. The current PDF of the Request for Applications (RFA), which incorporates the changes, can be found on Grants.Gov under the “Full Announcement” tab. Additionally, the amended RFA, along with a list of the corrections, is available on our website at: http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/npic-2013-rfa-amendment-1_8.21.13.pdf

2. Is this an open competition or is it assumed the current cooperative agreement partner will win?

This competition is open to all eligible entities listed under Section III of RFA. All applications will be reviewed according to the process outlined Section V in the RFA. The competition is being conducted in accordance with EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements. When assistance agreements are awarded competitively, EPA policy requires that the competitive process be fair and impartial, that all applicants be evaluated only on the criteria stated in the announcement, and that no applicant receive an unfair competitive advantage.

3. What are the eligibility requirements for applicants? Are these requirements flexible?

The eligibility requirements are outlined in Section III, of the RFA, on pages 11 and 12.

No, these requirements are not flexible.

4. What is the history of the program? Has it always been at one institution?

The NPIC program and previous iterations of the program under different names have been supported by EPA since the late 1970's. Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and Texas Tech University previously operated the program as the National Pesticide Information Clearinghouse and the National Pesticide Telecommunications Network. In 1995, Oregon State University won the renewal competition for the program and has successfully competed for the program in competitions since that time. The program was renamed the National Pesticide Information Center in 2001.

5. Is this a “research” grant?

No. Funding for this program is provided under Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) which was amended in FY 2000 to authorize the Agency to issue assistance agreements for research, public education, training, monitoring, demonstration and studies. The intent of this particular program is not for academic research, but foremost, to

provide an informational service to the general public and secondarily, to collect data and make it available to inform the public, research institutions, state pesticide and health agencies, and other public health programs regarding pesticide incidents.

This program focuses primarily on translating scientific information to the general public, via a telephone service and website, in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

“Over the five year period, the NPIC program is intended to provide to the public unbiased, accurate, science-based information on a broad range of pesticide-related issues, in a manner accessible to a diverse network of stakeholders having a range of spoken languages and literacy levels. The program is intended to respond swiftly to questions and connect inquirers with local, state and federal resources on pesticides and pesticide-related issues.”

Although previous participants have published a limited number of academic papers utilizing data from this program, the activities, outputs and outcomes anticipated under this program focus on providing services and resources to the general public, as outlined, not on conducting academic research.

6. Is the current Project Officer a reviewer for the applications?

No, the current Project Officer will not be reviewing applications received under this RFA.

7. Has the funding amount changed from previous iterations of the program?

Yes. Due to Agency budget constraints the funding amount for this competitive renewal cycle has been reduced from previous cycles. .

8. Is the new announcement for new program or it also opens for the existing programs?

This new, competitive announcement is soliciting applications to continue support the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC), a longstanding cooperative agreement program funded by EPA. Current and previous grantees, if eligible under the requirements listed in Section III of the RFA, are eligible to compete for this funding cycle. Applications from eligible entities will be evaluated against the criteria described in the Section V of the RFA.

9. Would the existing information on the current website be available to the new entity running the NIPC, or would it have to recreate all documents.

Cooperative agreements are intended to benefit the public, not a particular cooperative agreement partner or grantee. Under EPA grant regulations, EPA has the right to reproduce, publish, use and authorize others to use data developed under the current cooperative agreement. EPA also reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use copyrighted works for Federal purposes and to authorize others to do so. All materials generated under previous iterations of the NPIC program, such as webcontent, outreach tools and collected data, will be transferred to the selected awardee of this competitive renewal if an awardee other than the current NPIC partner is selected.

10. Would you please explain a little more on what evidence of past performance is needed and how it could be presented?

The requirements for evidence of past performance are outlined in *Section IV. E.7.d. Part V Past Performance- Background, Programmatic Capability/Capacity and Environmental Results Past Performance*.

All applicants are encouraged to be specific, clear and organized in their narrative and other application components.

11. Who will be on the review panel - agency personnel only?

EPA does not disclose the identity of reviewers in order to maintain the integrity of the review process.

12. Have you had any additions to the program based in the RFA?

The activities, outputs, outcomes and other contents of this RFA are based on best practices learned through the life of the program. The format for EPAs Request for Applications has been modified over time to provide greater clarity. Notably, the minimum number of hours and days for the phone line to be open has been reduced from the previous RFA due to the decrease in funds.

13. Do the budget narrative, Appendix A (timetable), Appendix B (resumes) and Appendix C (indirect cost rate agreement) count against the 25 page limit discussed on page 16 of the RFA?

Section IV.E.7 Project Narrative Proposal describes the page limits for the Cover Page, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Project Narrative. Section IV.E.1-6 and Section IV.E.8-12 are independent and indicate page limits where appropriate.

To clarify Section IV.E.11 Appendix B: Resumes, each individual resume may not exceed 2 pages. There is not a limit on the number of resumes that can be submitted, but as indicated, resumes should represent major project participants.

14. If we submit letters of support in our proposal, would these need to be included in the project narrative section, or could they be appended at the end of the proposal?

The RFA has been modified to clarify that EPA will consider letters of support. Letters of support may be appended and are not included in the 25 page limit of the narrative.

The RFA has been modified to state in Section IV.E.13:

“Letters of Support. When the work plan describes partnerships, funding, or in-kind services, a letter of support must be included in the proposal. Letters of support clearly state the intent of the partner and their contribution, cash or in-kind services to the project. You must submit the letters as part of your grant proposal package and these letters will not count toward the page limit requirement of the narrative. Letters of recommendation will not be accepted.”

15. On page 6, [Section I.C.3.a.ii.], the RFA states that "The service should provide assistance in real time during business hours and within 24 hours following receipt of voicemail or email." Could the 24 hour response for voicemail or e-mail be reasonably interpreted as response within one business day (i.e. If a message is left on a Saturday, response would be delivered on Monday)?

Yes.

16. Are there any specific requirements regarding the font type and size to be used for the proposal?

Applications should use Times New Roman font, 12-point size.