

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

Funding Opportunity Title: Targeted Watersheds Grants Program: Urban Watershed Capacity Building Grant

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-10-03

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.439

Dates: Hard copy proposals must be received by EPA (See Sections IV and VII of this RFP) by **5:00 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) May 19, 2010**. Proposals submitted electronically via e-mail must be received by **5:00 P.M. EDT May 19, 2010**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII **May 6, 2010**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: www.epa.gov/twg.

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. A final application will be requested from the eligible entity whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The entity will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

Note to Applicants: If you name subawardees and/or contractor(s) in your proposal to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section II.C CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS.

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement to an eligible entity to manage an Urban Watershed Capacity Building Grant under the Targeted Watershed Grants (TWG) Program. Specifically, EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants that address the following two project components: (1) establish and manage a competitive urban watershed subaward program; and (2) provide urban watershed technical services. For the subaward program, the applicant will: i) prepare and advertise a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP), establish review criteria for evaluating and selecting subaward proposals, and make subawards to support urban watershed capacity building projects for activities that lead to environmental, public health, and related socioeconomic benefits to the surrounding communities and their residents; ii) oversee and monitor subawardees for successful completion of the urban watershed capacity building projects; and iii) qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the urban watershed capacity building projects accomplished through the subawards. The urban watershed

subaward program proposed by the applicant must be on a national scale by allowing for subaward proposals for capacity building projects within urban areas from across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories. For the urban watershed technical services, the applicant will provide outreach and technical support to subawardees to broaden participation in urban watershed capacity building projects.

Eligible applicants are states, local governments, public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, U.S. territories or possessions, and interstate agencies. For-profit commercial entities and all federal agencies are ineligible. Nonprofit 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 1995 are not eligible to apply. The cooperative agreement funded as a result of this announcement will be awarded under the authority contained in the 2007 Appropriations, H.J. Res. 20 (P.L. 110-5) for Targeted Watershed Grants.

The total amount of federal funding expected to be available under this announcement is approximately \$600,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share /match requirement). EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement under this announcement with a three year project period. The subawards funded under the cooperative agreement must be completed prior to the end of the cooperative agreement project period. The subawards need to be completed in sufficient time for the recipient to, for example, aggregate results and ensure that subawardees have been reimbursed for all incurred costs. The anticipated number of subawards is estimated at five to seven, at approximately \$40,000 to \$60,000. Note: Applicants can identify a slightly different range and average amount of each subaward as part of their proposals.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. BACKGROUND

Targeted Watersheds Grant Program

The Targeted Watersheds Grant (TWG) Program encourages watershed organizations to collaborate and implement environmental change. Through the program, EPA awards cooperative agreements to assist in building the capacity of watershed organizations so that these organizations are better positioned to undertake restoration and protection efforts and produce measurable environmental results. Even well-established watershed organizations benefit from continuing education in areas such as organizational and leadership development, sustainable financing, water quality monitoring and assessment, establishing performance measures, data management, and innovative approaches and technologies to watershed restoration and protection.

The objective of the capacity building component of the TWG Program is to develop the capacity of watershed organizations. The objective is two-fold: 1) to promote the

organizational development and growth of local watershed partnerships and stakeholders committed to improving and maintaining the natural and economic resources of their watersheds; and 2) to provide training and technical assistance to these groups so they can better address watershed-based problems and help develop sustainable solutions.

Urban Watershed Focus Area

EPA is developing a new Urban Waters initiative to help communities access, restore and benefit from their urban waters and surrounding land. This initiative has a particular focus on disadvantaged communities and those with environmental justice challenges. The Urban Waters initiative is an effort to achieve water quality improvements in urban communities by working with urban residents to reconnect with and revitalize their waterways. A key component is engaging communities in capacity building activities to foster an increased connection, understanding and ownership of their waters.

Urban waters are especially important as they impact large populations and influence land-use decisions in the entire watershed. Often, when urban rivers, lakes and streams are inaccessible or degraded, the surrounding communities do not view them as valuable. Urban patterns of development often isolate communities from their waters, limiting their involvement in restoration activities. Promoting accessibility to water and linking water to other community priorities (such as education and quality of life) will help communities to sustain their involvement to meet environmental improvement goals.

At the federal level, the Urban Waters initiative will link EPA programs and the Agency will collaborate with other federal government entities, states and local governments, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. The TWG Program uses the watershed approach and the principles of capacity building to encourage the development of local, cross sector partnerships to protect and restore watersheds. The TWG Program is designed to encourage community-based approaches and management techniques to protect and restore the nation's watersheds and encourage sustainable watershed practices.

EPA anticipates that the cooperative agreement to be funded under this announcement will serve as a capacity building pilot focused on the goal of restoring and protecting urban waters. The TWG Program supports the Urban Waters initiative by focusing on capacity building activities that build stronger, more sustainable urban watershed efforts by encouraging the development of multiple urban partnerships. In particular, the TWG Program's watershed approach allows for increased and improved coordination among existing urban programs that share the same watershed or geographic focus. Finally, the community driven focus of the TWG Program aligns with the goals of the Urban Waters initiative to engage urban communities and sustain their involvement to meet community and environmental goals. This pilot program should answer issues regarding urban water impairments and lack of community engagement and how to best address water quality issues through capacity building activities using a watershed approach.

This announcement is based on the growing need for local watershed protection efforts in urban areas. EPA is encouraging local watershed organizations and local communities to envision the role their watershed should have in their long range community development plans and aiding communities to formulate a means to achieve this. Under this announcement, proposals should be aimed at meeting the organizational and technical needs of local watershed organizations and local communities in urban areas.

For the purposes of this announcement, an “urban area” is defined as an area where the majority of land use is marked by a high density of created structures and developments. It is also marked by a high population density. A high population density consists of core census block groups or blocks that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and surrounding census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile (<https://ask.census.gov>).

Under this announcement, EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to address the following two project components: (1) establish and manage a competitive urban watershed subaward program; and (2) provide urban watershed technical services to subawardees. These components are described further in Sections I.B and I.C below. For the purposes of this announcement, an “urban watershed” is defined as, a waterbody that is part of a larger urban watershed having impairments or degradations of which the root causes are related to the effects of urbanization of the surrounding areas. Waterbody impairments may include hydrological changes of the waterbody (i.e., increased peak flows and flooding or loss of base flow), channelization, or loss of aquatic species, and may include pollutant loadings (i.e., adverse impacts from stormwater, discharges, or combined sewer overflows). To define further, a significant portion of the contributing catchment of the urban watershed will consist of development where the combined area of roofs, roads, and other paved surfaces result in an impervious surface area characterizing greater than ten percent of the catchment. The value of ten percent impervious surface area is commonly accepted as the amount of catchment imperviousness that commonly results in the degradation of a water system (Beach 2003; Ladson et al 2004).

For the purposes of this announcement and to encourage the use of a watershed approach in addressing urban water issues, the boundaries of an urban area are not limited to state, tribal, or local government boundaries; rather, EPA encourages applicants to describe creative partnerships involving a variety of members from adjacent metropolitan areas that are a part of the urban watershed.

For the purposes of this announcement, “local communities” are communities that are disproportionately impacted by the environmental harms and risks and have local environmental and/or public health issues that are identified and linked to the impairments or degradations associated with the urban watershed.

B. URBAN WATERSHED SUBAWARD PROGRAM

The urban watershed subaward program proposed by the applicant must address how the applicant will manage a subaward program on a national scale by allowing for subaward proposals for capacity building projects within urban areas from across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories. The capacity building projects funded as subawards are expected to help subawardees to examine water-related problems in the context of the urban area in which they exist, develop solutions to those problems by creatively applying the full array of available tools, including identification of federal, state, and local programs that may support the solutions, and promote the protection of water resources through strategic planning and implementation that draws in public and private sector partners.

The urban watershed subaward program should promote community stewardship by helping local watershed organizations and local communities become effective, results-oriented, and self-sustaining. In general, it is anticipated that the subawards will result in the increased capacity of local watershed organizations and local communities to make better decisions based on a better understanding of their urban watershed, thus leading in the future to improved restoration and protection efforts. The anticipated number of subawards is estimated at five to seven, at approximately \$40,000 to \$60,000. Note: Applicants can identify a slightly different range and average amount of each subaward as part of their proposals.

In their proposals, as noted in Section IV, applicants should describe their specialized experience in conducting or overseeing urban watershed projects with varying social, cultural/ethnic, lingual, ecological and financial resource conditions in disadvantaged communities and those with environmental justice challenges.

As part of their technical approach in their proposals, applicants must describe their approach to:

1. Prepare and advertise a competitive subaward RFP on a national scale as described above, establish review criteria for evaluating and selecting subaward proposals, and make subawards to support urban watershed capacity building projects;
2. Oversee and monitor subaward recipients for successful completion of the urban watershed capacity building projects; and
3. Qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the environmental results of the urban watershed capacity building projects accomplished through the subawards.

At a minimum, the urban watershed capacity building projects funded as subawards should have the following components:

1. include an environmental training component;
2. include a variety of partners;
3. include activities that lead to environmental, public health, and related socioeconomic benefits;
4. be part of a watershed plan; and

5. facilitate future on-the ground, voluntary restoration or protection efforts for an urban watershed.

Examples of subaward activities that a recipient should include in the RFP for the urban watershed subaward program include, but are not limited to:

- conducting a general risk assessment of the urban watershed;
- community asset mapping in connection to serving the needs of the urban watershed;
- establishing urban watershed community roundtables for the purposes of developing partnerships; and
- creating educational programs on addressing degradation and impairment of waters for local land use decision-makers.

Applicants may include any other subaward activities in the RFP for the urban watershed subaward program that they believe will help promote and attain the objectives and goals described in this announcement.

EPA encourages applicants to identify in their proposals a broad applicant pool for the competitive subaward program. Eligible entities for the competitive subaward program include states, local governments, public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, U.S. territories or possessions, and interstate agencies.

For the purposes of this announcement, EPA has determined that the following types of entities are **ineligible** for the competitive subaward program: individuals, for-profit entities, and all federal agencies. EPA award officials will disapprove the costs of proposed subaward work to 501(c)(4) organizations identified in an application, or workplan changes requiring prior approval, if the work involves lobbying activities or would otherwise violate the principles of EPA's subaward policy.

C. URBAN WATERSHED TECHNICAL SERVICES

In addition to establishing and managing an urban watershed subaward program, applicants must provide urban water technical services to subawardees. As part of their technical approach in their proposals, applicants should describe how they will provide outreach and technical support to subawardees to broaden participation in urban watershed capacity building projects. Examples of activities that a recipient should offer as urban watershed technical services to the subawardees include, but are not limited to:

- dissemination and use of existing watershed tools (including both federal tools and tools from non-federal organizations);
- serving as environmental leadership coaches;
- facilitating peer to peer outreach;
- training in sustainable financing; and
- providing individual consultation services and training.

D. EPA'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The TWG Program is linked to EPA's Strategic Plan (2006-2011 Strategic Plan). It is predicated on the concept that watersheds are improved most effectively and efficiently by managing water resource use and water quality on a watershed basis. The Urban Watershed Capacity Building Grant to be funded under this announcement supports EPA's strategic goals to improve and restore impaired water quality on a watershed basis and facilitate ecosystem-scale protection and restoration under EPA Strategic Goal 2 Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.2 (Protect Water Quality), Sub-objective 2.2.1 (Protect and Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis) and Goal 4 - Healthy Communities and Ecosystems, Objective 4.3 (Restore and Protect Critical Ecosystems). For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to: <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>.

All proposed projects must address the Strategic Plan priorities and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goals of clean and safe water and restoring and protecting healthy communities and ecosystems.

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Expected environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- The number of urban watershed capacity building projects funded through subawards.
- General risk assessments of the urban watersheds.
- Community asset mapping in connection to serving the needs of the urban watershed.
- Urban watershed community roundtables to develop partnerships.
- Educational programs on addressing degradation and impairment of waters for local land use decision-makers.
- Outreach and technical support to subawardees to broaden participation in urban capacity building projects (e.g., training in sustainable financing and environmental leadership coaching).
- Development and verification of subawardee tracking (reporting) systems.

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's

performance. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. Outcomes may be short-term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skill), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of natural resources).

Examples of anticipated environmental outcomes from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Accelerated watershed protection at the local level through support of local watershed organizations and local communities.
- Enhanced public participation and awareness of water quality issues at the community level.
- Transfer of knowledge among urban watershed organizations.
- Increased watershed knowledge and information available to local decision-makers who write and implement laws, ordinances, and permits.
- In the long-term, improved water quality, Clean Water Act Section 303(d) delisting of streams, and increased recreational uses of water bodies.

Anticipated outcomes can be behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature. For example, an expected outcome under this announcement might be increasing the watershed knowledge and information available to local and state decision-makers who write and implement laws, ordinances, and permits. In this context, certain efforts designed to increase the watershed approach knowledge of decision-makers can be viewed as environmental outcomes (results) if the recipient can show or measure the improvement in the knowledge of decision-makers who are in the position to create institutional changes that are necessary to restore or protect the environment. Under this announcement, "outcomes" are not expected to be measured by environmental or water quality indicators, but rather by institutional or social indicators related to the adoption and application of laws and regulations and the active management of programs necessary to provide environmental protection.

Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of outputs and outcomes can be found at:

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf> or
<http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/documents/FY06NPGappendix-b.pdf>.

E. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The cooperative agreement funded as a result of this announcement will be awarded under the authority contained in the 2007 Appropriations, H.J. Res. 20 (P.L. 110-5) for Targeted Watershed Grants.

II AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

The total amount of federal funding expected to be available under this announcement is approximately \$600,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share /match requirement). Funds awarded under this announcement may be used for travel support for the recipient and subawardees to participate in training workshops.

Under this announcement, EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement for a three year project period. The subawards funded under the cooperative agreement must be completed by the end of the cooperative agreement project period. The subawards need to be completed in sufficient time for the recipient to, for example, aggregate results and ensure that subawardees have been reimbursed for all incurred costs. The anticipated number of subawards is estimated at five to seven, at approximately \$40,000 to \$60,000. Note: Applicants can identify a slightly different range and average amount of each subaward as part of their proposals.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity to the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

It is anticipated that a cooperative agreement will be funded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for the project selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
3. In accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g) and 40 CFR 30.43(e) as appropriate, review of proposed procurements;
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient);
5. EPA staff will review the subaward RFP and may provide comments to ensure consistency with the applicant's scope of work (the recipient is responsible for the content of, and all final decisions regarding, the subaward RFP including the disposition of any EPA comments on the subaward RFP);

6. Review and comment on tasks/deliverables and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient);
7. EPA staff participation in the review process for selection of subawardees (the majority of the selection panel members must be from non-federal organizations);
8. EPA review and approval of the substantive terms of subawards to verify compliance with federal requirements (the final decision on the selection of subawardees rests with the recipient); and
9. Upon request by the recipient and subject to the availability of personnel, EPA will provide the recipient with access to EPA scientific expertise, sampling protocols, publicly available data, and other forms of technical assistance.

In addition to the anticipated substantial federal involvement provisions described above, EPA also anticipates providing an advisory and technical assistance role to the recipient and, at the request of the recipient, the subawardees that are funded under the urban watershed subaward program. However, EPA personnel will not manage subawards or otherwise direct the subawardees' performance.

C. CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS

1. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire

commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133 , and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

2. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for-profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

States, local governments, public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, U.S. territories or possessions, and interstate agencies are eligible to apply. For-profit commercial entities and all federal agencies are ineligible. Nonprofit 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 apply.

The term “interstate agency” is defined in CWA Section 502 as “an agency of two or more States established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more States, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator.”

Nonprofit organizations may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a nonprofit organization in OMB Circular A-122, now at 2 CFR Part 230. Interstate agencies may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority, which establishes their status.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will contribute a minimum non-federal cost share/match of 25 percent of the total project cost (*total federal share and applicant cost share/match*). This means that EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost.

The cost share/match may be provided in cash or can come from in-kind contributions, such as use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, etc., subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. Cost share/match must be for eligible and allowable project costs. Cost share/matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the workplan. All grant funds are subject to federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of restrictions are outlined in Section IV.G of this announcement) also apply to the use of cost share/match. Other federal grants may not be used as cost share/match without specific statutory authority. **Proposals which do not demonstrate how the applicant will meet the minimum 25 percent cost share/match requirement will not be considered for funding.**

The minimum match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four. EPA will use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{4} = \text{minimum match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$800,000 in order to meet the 25 percent cost share/match requirement, the applicant must be able to provide at least \$200,000 in cash or in-kind contributions.

Federally recognized Indian tribal governments may be exempt from this cost share/match requirement if fulfilling the cost share/match requirement would impose undue hardship. Tribal governments wishing to be exempt from the minimum 25 percent match requirement must submit a one-page written request via e-mail to the Agency contact identified in Section VII with justification within 30 calendar days from the date of issuance of this announcement. EPA will notify the potential applicant of its decision within 10 business days of receipt of the written request. If the cost share/match exemption is approved, the proposal will be reviewed for threshold eligibility as satisfying the 25 percent cost share/match requirement.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal package submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement.
2. Proposals must address how the applicant will establish and manage a competitive subaward program on a national scale by allowing for subaward proposals for capacity building projects within urban areas from across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories and how the applicant will provide urban watershed technical services to subawardees.
3. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the project narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. If a single spaced narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the twelve (12) page double spaced page limit for the project narrative specified in Section IV.C.3; excess pages will not be reviewed (Section IV.C.3 establishes a twelve (12) page double spaced project narrative page limit which would be the equivalent of six (6) single spaced pages; any single spaced pages in excess of six (6) pages will not be reviewed).
4. Applicants must demonstrate in the proposal how they will provide the minimum required cost share/match of 25 percent of the total project cost as described in Section III.B.
5. Proposals must be received by the EPA or received electronically, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline

6. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical issues attributable to EPA. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal via e-mail with the Agency contact identified in Section VII as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
7. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. **Hard copy proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered.** Electronic submission must be sent via e-mail to Initiative.watershed@epa.gov. **EPA will not accept faxed submissions.**
8. Proposals must be consistent with the funding restrictions set forth in Section III.D.

D. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Circulars: A-87 (now 2 CFR Part 225 (States and local governments)); A-122 (now 2 CFR Part 230 (nonprofit organizations)); or A-21 (now 2 CFR Part 220 (universities)). Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts). Funds cannot be used to pay for travel by federal agency staff.

Proposed project activities must also comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

EPA has chosen to declare certain projects or activities ineligible for funding. Watershed restoration or other site-specific implementation projects are **ineligible** under this announcement. Projects must be performed entirely within the United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories. The construction of buildings, the purchase of major equipment, and the payment of taxes for landowners will not be funded under this program.

For the purposes of this announcement, “major equipment” is defined as an article of property of a durable nature that normally may be expected to have a period of service

of a year or more after being put into use and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$10,000. Examples may include, but are not limited to vehicles, boats, motor homes, office furniture, construction equipment such as backhoes, fork-lifts, and trash booms and compaction systems. Note that the leasing of equipment may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the workplan.

Sustainable finance training activities funded under this program may not duplicate training activities funded under the Environmental Finance Center Grant Program. The Environmental Finance Center Grant Program provides funding to support Environmental Finance Centers (EFCs) that provide multi-media environmental finance expertise and outreach to regulated communities. The EFCs work with States, local governments and the private sector to address the growing costs of environmental protection. The EFCs provide finance-related training, education, and analytical studies to help these regulated parties develop solutions to the difficult "how-to-pay" issues associated with meeting environmental standards (see CFDA 66.203 at www.cfda.gov for more information).

Funding under this program is not for tasks, activities, or projects related to exploring, testing, and implementing smart growth policies, applications, and projects funded under the Environmental Policy and Innovation Grants (see CFDA 66.611 at www.cfda.gov for more information). Examples of ineligible activities include training and technical assistance to communities to revise local and state development regulations such as zoning and building codes.

For the purposes of this announcement, EPA has determined that the following types of entities are **ineligible** for the competitive subaward program: individuals, for-profit entities, and all federal agencies. EPA award officials will disapprove the costs of proposed subaward work to 501(c)(4) organizations identified in an application, or workplan changes requiring prior approval, if the work involves lobbying activities or would otherwise violate the principles of EPA's subaward policy.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGES

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms (SF) 424 and SF 424A, are available at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm and by mail upon request by calling the Grants and Interagency Agreements Management Division at (202) 564-5320.

B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option to submit their proposals in **one** of two ways: 1) electronically via e-mail **or** 2) hard copy and compact disc (CD) by express delivery service, hand delivery, or courier service to the EPA contact identified in Section IV.B.2. **Proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.** All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION below, regardless of mode of submission.

1. E-mail Submission

E-mail submissions must be submitted to: **Initiative.watershed@epa.gov** and be received by the submission deadline stated in Section IV.E of this announcement. E-mail submissions should include “**TWG Urban Watershed RFP**” and the submitting **applicant’s name** in the subject of the e-mail. All required documents listed in Section IV.C CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION of this announcement must be attached to the e-mail as separate Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) files. Please note that if you choose to submit your proposal materials via e-mail, you are accepting all risks attendant to e-mail submission including server delays and transmission difficulties. E-mail submissions exceeding 15MB will experience transmission delays which will affect when they are received by the Agency. For these size submissions, applicants should submit their proposal materials via hard copy or else they may be received late and not considered for funding. Applicants submitting their proposal materials through e-mail should confirm receipt of their materials with the Agency Contact identified in Section VII as soon as possible after submission. Annotated resumes (no more than 2 pages each), cost share/match commitment letters, and letters of support need to be scanned so that they can be attached and submitted electronically.

2. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD) Submission

Two hard copies of all required documents listed in Section IV.C CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION, and an electronic version on a CD, are required to be sent by express delivery service, courier service, or hand delivered. Please mark all submissions: **ATTN: TWG Urban Watershed RFP**. The CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc) Annotated resumes (no more than 2 pages each), cost share/match commitment letters, and letters of support will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD.

The address for hard copy submission is:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds
EPA West Building, Room 7136J
1301 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
Attn: Yvonne Smothers-Pressley

C. CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely. A complete proposal package must include the following documents described below:

1. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424 - Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF 424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the website at www.dnb.com.

2. SF 424A - Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits) and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the proposal package. In Section B of the SF 424A, Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for non-federal cost share/match.

3. Proposal Narrative

NOTE: The Proposal Narrative must include sections A-D below. The project narrative (IV.C.3.C) portion is limited to no more than twelve (12) typewritten double spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the project narrative. Additional pages beyond the twelve (12) page limit will not be considered. Hard copy submissions should be submitted double-sided. If a single-spaced project narrative is submitted, it will be reviewed up to the equivalent of the twelve (12) page double-spaced page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed (the twelve (12) page double-spaced project narrative page limit would be the equivalent of six (6) single-spaced pages; any single-spaced pages in excess of six (6) will not be reviewed). Supporting materials (including the Cover Page, Executive Summary, and the attachments described in IV.C.3.D below) are not included within the page limit.

The Proposal Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.

A. Cover Page (not included in the page limit) including:

- i. Project title;
- ii. Name of applicant;
- iii. Number of proposals applicant is submitting (e.g., Proposal Number 1 of 2, or Proposal Number 1 of 1);
- iv. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number); and
- v. Total project cost: specify the amount of federal funds requested, the total project cost, and demonstrate how you will meet the required non-federal cost share/match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost.

B. Executive Summary (not included in the page limit): Provide a brief summary (recommended 500 words or less) of the proposal. This should include a brief description of the perceived need for the work, the proposed project, and the anticipated outputs and outcomes.

C. Project Narrative (subject to the page limit):

a. Technical Approach

Describe your technical approach for establishing and managing an urban watershed subaward program and providing urban watershed technical services to subawardees (see Section I.B. and I.C of this announcement). The subaward program proposed in the technical approach must be on a national scale by allowing for subaward proposals for capacity building projects within urban areas from across the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories. The technical approach must describe the applicant's approach to:

- i. Preparing and advertising an RFP soliciting proposals from potential subawardees and establishing review criteria for evaluating and selecting subaward proposals for urban watershed capacity building projects that: 1) include an environmental training component; 2) include a variety of partners; 3) include activities that lead to environmental, public health, and related socioeconomic benefits; 4) are part of a watershed plan; and 5) facilitate future on-the ground, voluntary restoration or protection efforts for an urban watershed;
- ii. overseeing and monitoring subawardees for successful completion of urban watershed capacity building projects;
- iii. qualitatively and quantitatively measuring and reporting on the environmental results of the urban watershed capacity building projects accomplished through the subawards; and
- iv. providing outreach and technical support to subawardees to broaden participation in urban watershed capacity building projects.

b. Environmental Results and Measuring Progress

- i. **Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan** - Describe the objective of the project and the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan (see Section I.D of this announcement).
- ii. **Results of Activities (Outputs)** - Describe the anticipated products/results (outputs) which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project activities, and describe an approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).

iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) -

Describe the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of the project's activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of workplan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).

- c. Milestone Schedule** – Provide a detailed projected timeline for the proposed project period (three years for the cooperative agreement). The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant. The timeline should include timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks/components including, but not limited to, release of the subaward RFP and the approximate time of award of the subawards. The project start date for the cooperative agreement will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant.
- d. Detailed Budget Narrative** – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task/component. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A such as “other” and “contractual”. All subaward funding should be located in the “other” cost category.
- i.** Total costs must include both federal and cost share/matching (non-federal) components. Identify the required cost share/match in the budget (a minimum non-federal cost share/match of 25 percent is required) and describe cost-effectiveness, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Include any proposed travel support for applicant staff and subawardees to participate in training workshops. Total costs must distinguish between federal and cost share/match components. For each cost category, indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by EPA and what portion of the cost will be covered by the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match as required in Section III.B. Cost share/match commitment letters are not included in the page limit.
 - ii.** When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other

e. **Programmatic Capability**

- i. **Organizational Experience.** Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
- ii. **Staff expertise/qualifications.** Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and also describe the applicant's resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). Letters of support from potential partner entities are encouraged and are not included in the page limit. Annotated resumes of applicant's key staff (no more than two pages each) are encouraged and are not included in the page limit.
- iii. **Specialized Experience.** Provide a brief description of the applicant's experience in conducting or overseeing urban watershed projects with varying social, culture/ethnic, lingual, ecological, and financial resource conditions in disadvantaged communities and those with environmental justice challenges.

f. **Past Performance**

- i. **Programmatic Past Performance.** Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe:
 - 1) Whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and
 - 2) Your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information,

please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. Failure to provide any programmatic past performance or reporting information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see also Section V).

- ii. **Environmental Results Past Performance.** Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements), and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V. Failure to provide any environmental results past performance information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, may result in a zero score for this factor (see also Section V).

- g. **Quality Assurance /Quality Control** – If the applicant expects to collect data and information, briefly describe how the applicant will assure and control data quality. If this is not applicable to the project, state so in the proposal. (Note: Development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required of all EPA assistance agreements that fund data collection and assessment. Cost of QAPP development should be included in the project budget.)

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its Proposal Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. Attachments (attachments are not included in the page limit)

- a. **Cost Share/Match Commitment Letters.** Letters signed by an authorizing official from entities committing to provide cost share/matching funds, either in cash or in-kind contributions, including the total value of its commitment toward the project.
- b. **Annotated Resumes.** Annotated resumes of applicant's key staff (no more than two pages each) are encouraged.
- c. **Letters of Support.** Letters of support from potential partner entities are encouraged.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section IV.B.2 by **5:00 P.M. EDT May 19, 2010**. Proposals submitted electronically via e-mail must be received by **5:00 P.M. EDT May 19, 2010**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

F. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark proposals or portions of proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c) (2) prior to disclosure. However, competitive proposals are considered confidential and protected from disclosure prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 total point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package.

1) Technical Approach (40 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the applicant describes a
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	<p>technical approach for addressing the following two project components:</p> <p><u>Urban Watershed Subaward Program</u></p> <p>a) Establishing and managing a subaward program, consistent with Section I.B of this announcement, including preparing and advertising a competitive RFP and establishing review criteria for evaluating and selecting subawardee proposals for urban watershed capacity building projects that: 1) include an environmental training component; 2) include a variety of partners; 3) include activities that lead to environmental, public health, and related socioeconomic benefits; 4) are part of a watershed plan; and 5) facilitate future on-the ground, voluntary restoration or protection efforts for an urban watershed. (20 points)</p> <p>b) Overseeing and monitoring subawardees for completion of urban watershed capacity building projects. (5 points)</p> <p>c) Qualitatively and quantitatively measuring and reporting on the environmental results of the urban watershed capacity building projects accomplished through the subawards. (5 points)</p> <p><u>Urban Watershed Technical Services</u></p> <p>a) Providing outreach and technical support to subawardees, consistent with Section I.C of this announcement, to broaden participation in urban watershed capacity building projects. (10 points)</p>
<p>2) Environmental Results and Measuring Progress (20 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion:</p> <p>a) The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates potential environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and the linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement). (10 points)</p> <p>b) The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking the applicant's progress toward achieving the anticipated project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I.D of this announcement. (10 points)</p>

3) Milestone Schedule and Detailed Budget (10 points)	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the following:</p> <p>a) A clearly articulated milestone schedule for projects tasks/components with a timeline outlining timeframes and major milestones, including but not limited to release of the subaward RFP and the approximate time of award of the subawards. (5 points)</p> <p>b) Reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget, whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable, and the cost-effectiveness of the budget. Total project costs must include both federal and required cost share/match (non-federal) components. (5 points)</p>
4) Programmatic Capability (Organizational Experience/Staff Expertise/Specialized Experience) (15 points)	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their:</p> <p>a) Organizational experience and infrastructure as it relates to their ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points)</p> <p>b) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (5 points)</p> <p>c). Specialized experience in conducting or overseeing urban watershed projects with varying social, cultural/ethnic, lingual, ecological, and financial resource conditions in disadvantaged communities and those with environmental justice challenges. (5 points)</p>
5) Past Performance (15 points)	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:</p> <p>a) Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years. (5 points)</p> <p>b) History of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and</p>

	<p>cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. (5 points)</p> <p>c) Extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (5 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under a), b), and c) above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance history must indicate that in the proposal and will receive a neutral score for these factors (i.e., 2.5 points for subcriterion a), 2.5 points for subcriterion b), and 2.5 points for subcriterion c). Failure to provide any past performance information may result in a zero score for these factors (i.e., zero points for subcriterion a), zero points for subcriterion b), and zero points for subcriterion c).</p>
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B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by EPA in hard copy or electronically via e-mail by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A review panel will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and will develop a ranked list of the proposals based on the evaluation scores received. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making the final funding decision, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account national program priorities.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. A final application will be requested from the eligible applicant whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The applicant will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the completed application will be provided at that time. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1.

An approvable final workplan is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component;
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with §35.115 of 40 CFR; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

In addition, the successful applicant will be required to ensure that it has not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 2 CFR Part 32.

The successful proposal will be posted at the following EPA website address: www.epa.gov/twg. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications (www.grants.gov will also contain information on any modifications to the announcement).

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 (States, Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and local governments), and 40 CFR Part 45 (Training Assistance). A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in the cooperative agreement will be included in the final agreement.

C. COMPETITION-RELATED DISPUTE PROCEDURES

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005), which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Agency Contact (see Section VII).

D. NON-PROFIT ADMINISTRATIVE CAPABILITY REQUIREMENT

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

E. DUNS NUMBER

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with the full application for federal grants or cooperative agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

F. COPYRIGHTS

In accordance with 40 CFR 30.36 for institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations, or 40 CFR 31.34 for other recipients, EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes copyrighted works developed under a grant, subgrant or contract under a grant or subgrant. Examples of Federal purpose include but are not limited to: (1) Use by EPA and other Federal employees for official Government purposes; (2) Use by Federal contractors performing specific tasks for the Government; (3) Publication in EPA documents provided the document does not disclose trade secrets (e.g. software codes) and the work is properly attributed to the recipient through citation or otherwise; (4) Reproduction of documents for inclusion in Federal depositories; (5) Use by State, tribal and local governments that carry out delegated Federal environmental programs as "co-regulators" or act as official partners with EPA to carry out a national environmental program within their jurisdiction; (6) Limited use by other grantees to carry out Federal grants provided the use is consistent with the terms of EPA's authorization to the grantee to use the copyrighted material.

G. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating this cooperative agreement, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the work plan consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, and 40 CFR Part 45.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency contact before **May 6, 2010**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/twg.

Agency Contact:

Yvonne Smothers-Pressley
Initiative.watershed@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC) and STORET

QA/QC requirements are applicable to these assistance agreements (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Agency Contact (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

Additionally, recipients of grants for projects that involve ambient monitoring will be required to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (short for STORage and RETrieval) database. STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water information of known quality. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET can be made via the new Water Quality Exchange (WQX). WQX is based upon the Environmental Sampling, Analysis, and Results (ESAR) standard, which defines a standard format for sharing monitoring and analytical data. More information about WQX and STORET can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/storet>. More information about ESAR can be found at http://www.exchangenetwork.net/standards/ESAR_Overview_01_06_2006_Final.pdf. Submitting data through WQX is done via EPA's Central Data Exchange, and leverages the Exchange Network (which is a State/Tribal/Federal data exchange partnership). These tools provide common internet protocols for sharing information. More information about CDX and the Exchange Network can be found at: <http://exchangenetwork.net>. Grantees should manage their data in a STORET compatible format that will facilitate the sharing of data via WQX.

B. DATA SHARING

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with Federal funds and (2) cited publicly and officially by a Federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations at 40 C.F.R. 30.36.

C. EXCHANGE NETWORK

EPA, states, territories, and tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network, a secure, Internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. States, tribes and territories exchanging data with each other or with EPA, should make the Exchange Network and the Agency's connection to it, the Central Data Exchange (CDX), the standard way they exchange data and should phase out any legacy methods they have been using. More information on the Exchange Network is available at www.exchangenetwork.net.