

**Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education  
Environmental Education Division**

**Solicitation Notice  
FY 2009 National Network for Environmental Management Studies Fellowship  
Program  
(CFDA 66.952)**

**Overview Information**

**A. Required Overview Content**

1. *Federal Agency Name* – Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education, Environmental Education Division
2. *Funding Opportunity Title* – FY 2009 National Network for Environmental Management Studies (NNEMS) Fellowship Program
3. *Announcement Type* – Request for Applications (RFA)
4. *Funding Opportunity Number* – EPA-EED-09-01
5. *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number* – 66.952: National Network for Environmental Management Studies Fellowship Program
6. *Dates* – Application due date: The deadline for electronic or hard-copy submissions of application packages for the 2009 NNEMS Fellowship Program is February 2, 2009. All hard-copy submissions must be postmarked by February 2, 2009 to be eligible for consideration. Students wishing to exercise the option of partial electronic submission must submit the SF 424 to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on February 2, 2009.
7. *Funding/Awards* – The total estimated funding for this competitive funding opportunity is approximately \$300,000. EPA anticipates awarding up to approximately 20 to 30 fellowships from this announcement, subject to availability of funds and the quality of applications received.

**B. Additional Overview Content**

1. *Executive Summary* – In recognition of the growing interest in environmental issues and careers, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established the National Network for Environmental Management Studies (NNEMS) Fellowship Program in 1986 to encourage students to pursue environmental careers. The NNEMS

program is a comprehensive fellowship program that provides students an opportunity to participate in a fellowship project that is directly related to their field of study.

The purpose of the NNEMS program is to:

- Provide students with practical research opportunities and experiences in EPA's program and regional offices and in its laboratories;
- Increase public awareness of and involvement in environmental issues;
- Encourage qualified individuals to pursue environmental careers; and
- Help defray the costs associated with the pursuit of academic programs related to the field of environmental protection, such as pollution control, science, engineering, technology, social science, and specialty areas.

Under the NNEMS program, a range of fellowship activities are offered to help students increase their knowledge of environmental issues while refining their professional skills. Each year, the NNEMS program offers approximately 20 to 30 fellowships, developed and sponsored by EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and in EPA's 10 regional offices and laboratories throughout the United States. The projects are specifically narrow in scope, allowing students to complete the research project while working full-time at EPA during the summer or part-time during the school year. Typically, the research is conducted at an EPA office or laboratory, although other arrangements can be made in certain circumstances.

Detailed descriptions of the fellowships are provided in the annual NNEMS Catalog as well as on the NNEMS Web site. The catalog is available online at [www.epa.gov/education/students.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/students.html) and project descriptions can be found at [www.epa.gov/education/NNEMS/2009projects.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/NNEMS/2009projects.html).

The fellowships are organized among five key areas:

- Environmental Policy, Regulation, and Law
- Environmental Management and Administration
- Environmental Science
- Public Relations and Communications
- Computer Programming and Development

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

### **A. Background**

EPA established the NNEMS program in 1986 to foster a growing interest among higher education students in environmental careers. The NNEMS program is a comprehensive fellowship program that provides students an opportunity to participate in a fellowship project that is directly related to their field of study. The NNEMS program is sponsored by the Environmental Education Division (EED) in the EPA Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education.

The purpose of the NNEMS program is to:

- Provide students with practical research opportunities and experiences in EPA's program and regional offices and in its laboratories;
- Increase public awareness of and involvement in environmental issues;
- Encourage qualified individuals to pursue environmental careers; and
- Help defray the costs associated with the pursuit of academic programs related to the field of environmental protection, such as pollution control, science, engineering, technology, social science, and specialty areas.

Students selected for NNEMS fellowships are offered a unique opportunity to gain research and training experience directly linked to their undergraduate or graduate studies. NNEMS fellows conduct research projects to augment their academic studies, which EPA supports with financial assistance in the form of a grant.

Under the NNEMS program, a range of fellowship activities are offered to help students increase their knowledge of environmental issues while refining their professional skills. Each year, the NNEMS program offers approximately 20 to 30 fellowships, developed and sponsored by EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and in EPA's 10 regional offices and laboratories throughout the United States. The projects are specifically narrow in scope, allowing students to complete the fellowship while working full-time at EPA during the summer or part-time during the school year. Typically, the research is conducted at an EPA office or laboratory, although other arrangements can be made in certain circumstances.

The fellowships are organized among five categories:

- **Environmental Policy, Regulation, and Law**  
Fellowships offered in this category provide students an opportunity to review and evaluate existing policies and regulations, as well as conduct research related to the development of new policies. The projects may include a component that focuses on environmental compliance.
- **Environmental Management and Administration**  
The topics of fellowships in this category focus on environmental management goals.
- **Environmental Science**  
Fellowships in this category typically include direct participation in field studies and laboratory research. Environmental policy and regulation review requiring technical expertise is included in the Environmental Policy, Regulation, and Law category described above.
- **Public Relations and Communications**  
These types of fellowships include the review and analysis of public response to EPA policies and regulations, as well as general public opinion of environmental issues. The projects may include the development of communication tools; for example, pamphlets and informational materials.

- **Computer Programming and Development**  
Fellowships in this category may include the development of computer software, the development and querying of databases, and the design of programming functions required in laboratory work.

Detailed descriptions of the fellowships offered this year are provided in EPA's NNEMS Catalog for 2009 as well as on the NNEMS Web site. The NNEMS Catalog can be found at [www.epa.gov/education/students.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/students.html) and project descriptions can be found at [www.epa.gov/education/NNEMS/2009projects.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/NNEMS/2009projects.html). The NNEMS Catalog for 2009 can be viewed or downloaded in portable document format (pdf) and portions of the 2009 catalog are available in HTML format for interactive viewing of the fellowships.

## **B. Authority and Regulations**

The authority for this Request for Application (RFA) and resulting awards is contained in the National Environmental Education Act, Section 7; Public Law 101-619.

## **II. Award Information**

EPA has awarded more than 1,400 fellowships under the NNEMS program since its inception in 1986, and expects to award approximately 20 to 30 fellowships in 2009 for an estimated total amount of \$300,000.

All NNEMS fellowships are awarded directly to the individual students who are selected as fellows. The awards cannot be made to the educational institution at which the student is enrolled, although a student may request that EPA submit payment of a portion of his or her tuition costs directly to the institution.

Students selected for a fellowship receive a grant award in the form of a stipend. The grant is paid in monthly installments based on the duration of the project. Grant awards reflect an individual student's level of education, as well as the location and duration of the fellowship. Even though students selected to receive NNEMS fellowships are grantees and not federal employees, the formula for the appropriate stipend amount is based on the current General Schedule (GS) grades 4 through 9 federal pay scale, and includes standard government locality rates. Freshmen students, for example, will be paid at the GS-04 rate; advanced graduate students at the GS-09 rate. For example, grants awarded for a 3-month full-time period would range from approximately \$7,400 to \$12,600 per award. The stipend will be increased to compensate for costs associated with travel or training for fellowships that require these activities. Information about the GS pay scale by localities is available online at [www.opm.gov/oca/08tables/indexGS.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/08tables/indexGS.asp). Please note that rates for 2009 will be adjusted according to the new GS scale.

The anticipated start date for the 2009 fellowships is June 2009.

NNEMS fellowships cannot be extended or renewed.

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications for NNEMS fellowships and make no awards under this announcement or make fewer awards than anticipated. The EPA also reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than August 2009.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

A NNEMS fellowship is available to any associate, undergraduate, or advanced student who meets the general requirements listed below, as well as those identified for associate, undergraduate, and advanced students.

#### **General Requirements**

At a minimum, all applicants must be:

- A citizen of the United States, its territories or possessions, or lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residency. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services defines lawful permanent residency as any person not a citizen of the United States who is residing in the United States under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant, also known as “Permanent Resident Alien,” “Resident Alien Permit Holder,” and “Green Card Holder.” A lawful permanent resident must provide his or her Green Card number on his or her application.
- Enrolled for academic credit at a 2- or 4-year college or university, or distance-learning institution accredited by a regional or national accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation<sup>1</sup>, and
- Pursuing an educational program directly related to pollution control or environmental protection for the duration of the fellowship.

#### **Associate and Undergraduate Students**

Students attending 2- or 4-year institutions or distance-learning institutions must meet the following requirements:

- 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) based on a scale of 4.0 at the time the application is due (a GPA of 2.999 for example, is not sufficient), and

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants are not required to be enrolled at the time the application is due, typically in late January or early February, but must be enrolled at the time of fellowship award, which is typically in April or May. For example, an applicant who graduated with an undergraduate degree a few years ago and is not currently enrolled in an academic program, may submit an application for a NNEMS fellowship if the applicant has applied to, been accepted at, and is enrolled in a graduate school or doctoral program that will begin in the Fall of 2009. Please note that EPA is prohibited from awarding fellowships to applicants who have been accepted to, but have not enrolled in, an academic program.

- Completion of at least four courses related to the field of environmental studies.

### Advanced Students

Students enrolled in graduate or doctoral programs must meet the following requirements:

- Currently enrolled in a graduate or Ph.D. program or can provide proof of acceptance and enrollment to a graduate or Ph.D. program at the time of fellowship award, and
- Completion of at least one semester of graduate or Ph.D. work, or at least four undergraduate courses related to the field of environmental studies.

The following students are not eligible for a NNEMS fellowship:

- Federal employees, including those who are on “leave without pay” status.
- Undergraduate and graduate students who will graduate before the NNEMS fellowship is completed (students who complete their undergraduate studies before the end of a fellowship may apply if they are admitted and enrolled in a graduate program).
- Students enrolled in certificate programs.
- High school students.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

There is no matching or cost sharing required of students awarded NNEMS fellowships.

### **C. Threshold Eligibility Criterion**

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications from eligible entities (see above) that meet all of these criterion will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this 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. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or they will be rejected.
  - a. In addition, all hard-copy materials (including the partial submittal of hard-copy materials for those applying electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)) must be postmarked by February 2, 2009 to be eligible for consideration. Students wishing to exercise the option of partial electronic submission must submit the SF 424 to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. EST on February 2, 2009.

- b. Applications postmarked 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.
2. A student who is currently holding a NNEMS fellowship may apply for a new fellowship in 2009. The existing fellowship, however, must be completed and the fellowship ended before a student will be considered eligible to begin a new fellowship.
3. Students may apply for as many fellowships as desired. Separate, complete application packages (one original and three copies) must be submitted for each fellowship project. Official transcripts may be photocopied if a student is submitting more than one application package. If more than one project application is submitted, the student must indicate the order of preference of each project on the Application Form.
4. Students may apply for consecutive projects, but the first fellowship must be completed before the second fellowship begins. For example, an applicant may apply for a project that ends in August as well as for a project that begins in September.

#### **IV. Application and Submission Information**

##### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

The NNEMS Catalog for 2009 can be viewed or downloaded in pdf from EED's Web site at [www.epa.gov/education/students.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/students.html). Portions of the 2009 catalog are also available in HTML format for interactive viewing of the fellowships.

##### **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Application packages may be submitted in hard copy or electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) as explained more fully below (only part of the package can be submitted electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)). Whether submitting an application via hard-copy or electronically, all students who are interested in applying for a NNEMS fellowship must submit a complete application package that includes:

- A completed NNEMS Application Form
- A completed Standard Form 424 – Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- A résumé
- An official transcript for each 2- or 4-year college or university, or distance-learning institution attended. Official transcripts should be opened and photocopied as one original and three photocopies of the transcript are required for each complete application. If submitting multiple applications, only one original transcript is required. Applicants should include in the application package the envelope in which the original transcript was provided.
- A completed NNEMS Reference Form. The Reference Form should be prepared by a professor or advisor who knows the applicant well and can specifically discuss the student's aptitude and/or experience for the project. The Reference Form should be included with the application package; however, a reference

submitted under separate copy will be accepted if it is received on or before the application deadline.

- A completed and signed original NNEMS Disclosure and Waiver Statement.
- Verification of acceptance and/or enrollment in a graduate or Ph.D. program if the applicant is a graduating senior.

Students have the option of submitting their application package in one of the following two ways:

- 1) hard-copy submission via mail, courier, or express delivery, or
- 2) partial electronic submission via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) with hard-copy attachments submitted via mail, courier, or express delivery. Please carefully read the following submission instructions for each option.

### **Hard-Copy Submission**

Applicants must submit all of the information identified above. Blank application forms are included in *Appendix A, Application Materials* of the NNEMS Catalog for 2009, and may also be obtained on the NNEMS program Web site at [www.epa.gov/education/students.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/students.html). Students must submit a complete application package (an original and three copies) for each project for which they are applying to.

All hard-copy materials must be postmarked February 2, 2009 to be eligible for consideration. Applications 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.

### **Partial Electronic Submission**

As an alternative to full hard-copy submission of their application package, students have the option of submitting the SF 424 electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Students must submit the remaining required parts of their application package including the: 1) NNEMS Application Form, 2) résumé, 3) transcripts, 4) NNEMS Reference Form, 5) NNEMS Disclosure and Waiver Statement, and 6) verification of acceptance and/or enrollment in a graduate or Ph.D. program (if appropriate), in hard-copy form via mail, courier, or express delivery and this submittal must be postmarked by the application deadline of February 2, 2009. All portions of the hard-copy submission must include one original and three photocopies. Students wishing to exercise the option of partial electronic submission can access the SF 424 for the 2009 NNEMS Program at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) (by entering CFDA Number 66.952 or Program Announcement Identifier EPA-EED-09-01). The SF 424 must be submitted to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. EST on February 2, 2009. See Instructions for Electronic Submissions under Section IV(F).

Once a student has accepted a fellowship offer, the NNEMS staff will then send the student a Fellowship Application Packet, instructions for completing the forms in the

packet, and a copy of the Guidebook for NNEMS 2009 Fellows. The forms must be completed and returned to the NNEMS staff within 2 weeks of receipt in order to begin the processing of the paperwork required of all fellowships. A delay in the submittal of the paperwork will result in a delay in the fellowship start date.

### **C. Submission Dates and Times**

The deadline for electronic or hard-copy submissions of applications for 2009 fellowships is **February 2, 2009**. All hard-copy materials (including the partial submittal of hard-copy materials for those applying electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)) must be postmarked by February 2, 2009, to be eligible for consideration. Applications postmarked after February 2, 2009 will not be accepted. **Students wishing to exercise the option of partial electronic submission must submit the SF 424 to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. EST on February 2, 2009.**

Students whose applications were received with a postmark on or before February 2, 2009 will receive an e-mail at the e-mail address identified in the “Current E-mail” and/or “Permanent E-mail” fields found on page 1 of the NNEMS Application Form. If you do not receive a confirmation of application receipt e-mail within 30 calendar days of the application deadline, please visit EPA’s NNEMS Web site at: [www.epa.gov/Education/students.html](http://www.epa.gov/Education/students.html) and click on the link to send an e-mail to the NNEMS Fellowship Program.

### **D. Intergovernmental Review**

Not Applicable.

### **E. Funding Restrictions**

Students selected for a fellowship receive a grant award in the form of a stipend. The grant is paid in monthly installments based on the duration of the project. EPA will not make payments under a fellowship agreement until the award official receives the signed Fellowship Activation Notice. Unless the fellowship provides another payment process, the student may request EPA to make the stipend payment as follows:

- A portion paid directly to the educational institution for tuition costs. Tuition costs sent directly to the educational institution attended by the student are tax exempt.
- Payment to the student on a monthly basis or another basis approved by the EPA project officer and as stated in the Fellowship Agreement. The payment may be made directly to the student or by direct deposit. Students interested in direct deposit should complete the Fellowship Stipend Payment Enrollment Form that is included in the Guidebook for NNEMS 2009 Fellows. Once the form is completed and returned to EPA’s Financial Management Center, the stipend payment will be made by direct deposit.

EPA is not responsible for a student's travel expenses to and from the project site or for the student's housing costs. If selected for a NNEMS fellowship that is located away from home or school, students are responsible for making their own arrangements for travel and housing.

If a student is required to participate in official travel during the performance of a project, EPA will add to the stipend additional funds to cover associated travel costs. Because students will not be reimbursed for any unapproved travel costs, it is very important that students do not incur any travel expenses until the stipend has been increased to cover such costs.

## **F. Other Submission Requirements**

### Instructions for Hard-Copy Submissions

All hard-copy NNEMS applications and hard-copy portions of applications submitted electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) must be submitted by mail, courier, or express delivery service to:

NNEMS Fellowship Program  
Tetra Tech EM Inc.  
1881 Campus Commons Drive, Suite 200  
Reston, VA 20191

### Instructions for Partial Electronic Submissions Through [www.Grants.Gov](http://www.Grants.Gov)

In order for partial submission through the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Web site, individual registration on the Web site is required; however, registration is not required to view the NNEMS application package. Please note that the registration process may take up to one business day to complete. To register, go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page and click on "Individual Registration."

To begin the application process, go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package" to download the compatible Adobe viewer and obtain the application package. To apply through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) you must use Adobe Reader applications and download the compatible Adobe Reader version (Adobe Reader applications are available to download for free on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Web site. For more information on Adobe Reader please visit the Help section on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) at [www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp) or [www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program\\_status.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp)). Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-EED-09-01, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.952), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) (to find the synopsis page, go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and click on the "Find Grant Opportunities" button on the left side

of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities). To view the full funding announcement, go to [www.epa.gov/education/grantsols.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/grantsols.html) or go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and click on “Find Grant Opportunities” on the left side of the page and then click on Search Opportunities/Browse by Agency and select Environmental Protection Agency.

**The SF 424 must be transferred through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) no later than 11:59 p.m. EST on February 2, 2009.** All hard-copy portions of applications including: 1) NNEMS Application Form, 2) résumé, 3) transcripts, 4) NNEMS Reference Form, 5) NNEMS Disclosure and Waiver Statement, and 6) verification of acceptance and/or enrollment in a graduate or Ph.D. program (if appropriate), must be postmarked on or before February 2, 2009.

On the electronic “Grant Application Package” page, students should enter their name, starting with last name, in the “Application Filing Name” field.

#### SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance

1. Enter "Preapplication."
2. Enter "New."
3. Leave blank.
4. Leave blank.
5. Federal Entity Identifier: Leave blank.  
Federal Award Identifier: Leave blank.
6. Leave blank.
7. Leave blank.
8. Legal Name: Enter your legal name in this order: last name, first name, middle initial/name.  
Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): Enter "123456789."  
Organizational DUNS: Leave blank.  
Address: Enter the address (including street, city, state, and zip code) you are currently using to receive United States Postal Service mail.  
Organizational Unit: Leave blank.  
Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application: Enter your name, telephone number, and e-mail address. Your middle name, suffix, and fax number are optional.
9. Enter "P. Individual."
10. Enter "Environmental Protection Agency."
11. Enter "66.952."
12. Enter "EPA-EED-09-01."
13. Leave blank.
14. Leave blank.
15. Enter the project title of the fellowship for which you are applying.
16. List your Congressional District under "Applicant." Under "Program/Project," list the Congressional District for the fellowship

- project location. To identify the appropriate Congressional District, go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).
17. Enter the project start and end dates for the fellowship for which you are applying.
  18. Leave blank.
  19. Enter "c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372."
  20. Self-explanatory.
  21. Enter your name, title, telephone number and e-mail address. "Student" or "Graduate Student" is an appropriate title. If you are submitting a hard-copy version, print a hard-copy of the SF 424 and sign the pre-application.

Once the application package has been completed, the "Submit" button will become active. Students should save their completed application package with two different file names before submission to avoid having to re-create the package should they experience submission problems. Close all other software before attempting to submit the application package.

If a student experiences submission problems, he or she should reboot his or her computer (turning the power off may be necessary) and re-attempt the submission. If a student continues to experience submission problems, he or she should contact [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) for assistance (phone: 1-800-518-4726; e-mail at [www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp)).

Applications submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) will be time and date stamped electronically. Late applications will not be considered.

### **G. Confidential Business Information**

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/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.

### **H. Application Assistance and Communications**

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft 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 applications/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.

## **V. Application Review Information**

Only eligible applicants whose application(s) meet the threshold criterion in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion set forth below.

### **A. Evaluation Criterion**

NNEMS fellowships are awarded annually on the basis of EPA's request for applications and the established evaluation criteria listed below.

- Relevancy of the classroom experience of the student as it relates to the EPA fellowship (maximum score = 15 points).
- Student's understanding of the proposed EPA fellowship subject matter (maximum score = 10 points).
- Relevancy of work experience of the student (whether volunteer activities, internships, or paid jobs) as it relates to the EPA fellowship (maximum score = 10 points).
- Relevancy of the student's academic studies to the EPA fellowship (maximum score = 5 points).
- Leadership skills, written communication skills, and demonstrated success at working well in an office, laboratory, or field environment, as appropriate to the project (maximum score = 5 points).
- Potential for success, as reflected by academic records, letter(s) of reference, and other relevant information (maximum score = 5 points).

Applications that are scored highly based on the evaluation criteria listed above by the panel of reviewers are then sent to the NNEMS staff and EPA project officers for consideration.

### **B. Review and Selection Process**

Every application submitted for a specific fellowship will first be reviewed by external reviewers to determine whether the eligibility requirements have been met. Applications that meet the eligibility requirements will subsequently be reviewed by panels comprised of EPA staff members. The panels review and evaluate each application based on the evaluation criteria listed above.

Students who are not selected for a 2009 fellowship will be notified initially by e-mail within 15 calendar days after a decision of non-selection is made. An official notification letter will be sent to the student's address provided on the NNEMS Application Form.

### **C. Award Dates**

EPA anticipates announcing awards in May 2009.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

## **A. Award Notices**

Once EPA has made a decision about whom to award a fellowship, the EPA project officer will contact the student to offer the fellowship and discuss specific details about the fellowship. The student should expect to discuss with the EPA project officer general information about the project, including:

- Specific location where the project will be conducted,
- Amount of the stipend to be paid to the student,
- Approximate duration of the project,
- Primary point of contact for the student,
- Names of the EPA staff with whom the student will be working,
- Access to telephone, e-mail, and the Internet, and
- General sources of information that will be made available to the students (for example, previous research studies, resources, etc.) and any non-monetary assistance that EPA may be able to provide to the student during the fellowship.

During the notification call, the EPA project officer will also review with the student the procedures he or she must follow to initiate and complete the fellowship as described in detail in the NNEMS Catalog for 2009 under Procedures to Initiate and Complete a NNEMS Fellowship.

The following describes the procedures that students who are selected to receive NNEMS fellowships must follow to initiate their fellowship.

The steps required to process a fellowship and the grant award are lengthy. It is imperative that students follow the instructions provided by EPA and submit all materials on time. A student may not begin a fellowship until all of the required documents are submitted.

### **Step 1: Complete and Submit the Fellowship Application Packet Forms**

A student selected for a NNEMS fellowship will receive a grant award in the form of a stipend. Because a NNEMS fellowship is a grant issued by a federal agency, the student must complete additional documentation required by the federal government. In addition to completing a NNEMS application, a student selected for a NNEMS fellowship must submit the forms described below to receive a fellowship grant.

An applicant selected to receive a fellowship will be notified by the EPA project officer. NNEMS staff will then mail the student an official Fellowship Application Packet that includes a Fellowship Application (EPA Form 5770-2), a Fellowship Facilities and Commitment Statement (5770-3), and a Fellowship Stipend Payment Enrollment Form (for students who would like their stipend payments made by direct deposit).

The Fellowship Application Packet forms must be completed, signed, and returned to the NNEMS staff within 2 weeks of receipt. A delay in the submittal of the paperwork will result in a delay in the fellowship start date.

### Step 2: Processing of the Fellowship Application

Upon receipt of the completed Fellowship Application Packet forms, NNEMS staff will work with the EPA project officer to submit the necessary paperwork to EPA's Grant Administration Division (GAD) for approval and award of the grant. All the information that the student provided will be verified by GAD and entered into its computer files. The student's grant will be assigned a number and a grants specialist will process the student's forms and mail the acceptance documents to the student's permanent mailing address (as indicated on the Fellowship Application) for the student's signature. The processing of the grant may take up to 6 weeks to complete. The official notification of an award will be made by GAD. A Congressional notification period of 5 days must be observed before the acceptance documents are mailed to the student.

### Step 3: Complete and Submit the Acceptance Documents

Approximately 6 weeks after the Fellowship Application Packet forms have been submitted to EPA, the student will receive his or her grant award documents, which include a Fellowship Agreement (EPA Form 5770-8), Fellowship Activation Notice (EPA Form 5770-7), and EPA Completion of Studies Notice (EPA Form 5770-9). The student may not start work with EPA until he or she has signed and returned the Fellowship Agreement. In addition, the student must have his or her EPA project officer sign the Fellowship Activation Notice on the student's first day with EPA and return it to GAD.

- **Fellowship Agreement** (EPA Form 5770-8). The Fellowship Agreement is the written agreement (including any amendments) between EPA and the student awarded a fellowship. The amount of the fellowship award and the terms and conditions of the fellowship are provided in the Fellowship Agreement. The student must sign the form and return it to GAD at the address provided on the form within 3 weeks of receipt or within a timeframe approved by GAD. If the student does not return the Fellowship Agreement or request an extension of the acceptance time limit within 3 weeks, the proposed start date of his or her fellowship will be delayed. EPA will not be responsible for any costs incurred under a voided agreement.
- **Fellowship Activation Notice** (EPA Form 5770-7). The Fellowship Activation Notice should be signed by the EPA project officer on the student's first day of work. The EPA project officer then should return the signed form to GAD. Once the signed Fellowship Activation Notice is received, GAD is responsible for sending the notice to EPA's Financial Management Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, to authorize payments to the student. If the Fellowship Activation Notice is not submitted to GAD within 90 days of the start of the fellowship, EPA will initiate action to terminate the fellowship agreement.

- **EPA Completion of Studies Notice** (EPA Form 5770-9). The EPA Completion of Studies Notice should be kept by the student until the end of his or her work with EPA. At that point, the EPA Completion of Studies Notice should be completed by the student, signed by the EPA project officer, and submitted by the student to EPA's Financial Management Center in Las Vegas, Nevada on the last day of the fellowship.

#### Step 4: Begin the Fellowship

The student should begin the fellowship on the date and at the location arranged with the EPA project officer and specified in the Fellowship Agreement.

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

If selected to receive a NNEMS fellowship, the student must agree to the following fellowship conditions:

- The fellow agrees that this fellowship may not be amended to extend the duration period beyond the number of months indicated in the Fellowship Agreement. The duration period of this fellowship will begin on the date indicated by the fellow in the upper right corner of the Fellowship Activation Notice in the block, "Date Fellow Will Enter on Duty".
- The fellow agrees to submit the following items at the conclusion of the fellowship program:

1. EPA Completion of Studies Notice (EPA Form 5770-9). This form shall be submitted by the student to the following address at the end of the project period indicated on page 1 of the agreement:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Las Vegas Finance Center  
P.O. Box 98515  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89193-8515

2. A final project report.

If the fellow withdraws from the program prior to the scheduled completion date, the fellow shall complete the EPA Completion of Studies Notice and send it to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Las Vegas Finance Center  
P.O. Box 98515  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89193-8515

Any stipend received after withdrawal from the program must be returned to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Financial Management Center  
P.O. Box 371293M  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15251

### **C. Reporting**

At the completion of a NNEMS fellowship, all NNEMS fellows are required to:

#### Submit a Final Report of the Project

A copy of the final report must be provided to the EPA project officer on the last day of the fellowship. Unless directed otherwise by the EPA project officer, the report should summarize the specific project undertaken by the student and the project results.

#### Submit the EPA Completion of Studies Notice (EPA Form 5770-9)

The EPA Completion of Studies Notice (EPA Form 5770-9) must be completed by the student, signed by the EPA project officer, and submitted by the student to EPA's Financial Management Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, on the last day of the fellowship. The final payment for the balance of the fellowship award, if any, is typically mailed to the student within 2 weeks after the fellowship has officially ended.

In addition, students may be contacted via phone or e-mail and asked to complete a program evaluation survey approximately one year from the completion of the fellowship.

### **D. Resolution of Disputes**

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://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be obtained by contacting the individual listed in Section VII of this announcement.

### **VII. Agency Contact(s)**

For additional information, please contact:

Mrs. Ginger Potter  
NNEMS Program  
Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education  
Environmental Education Division (1704A)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20460  
Telephone: 202-564-0443

Or visit EPA's NNEMS Web site at:  
[www.epa.gov/education/students.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/students.html).

Students who would like additional information on or clarification of a specific project should complete and submit the "Project-specific Questions" form that is available online at [www.epa.gov/education/NNEMS/2009projects.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/NNEMS/2009projects.html).

### **VIII. Other Information**

A background investigation for security purposes may be required of fellowship recipients, and personal information about the recipient will be required to complete these investigations. EPA reserves the right to terminate the fellowship agreement with a recipient if his or her background investigation reveals adverse information.