

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), National Risk Management Research Laboratory

TITLE: Research Training Program for College and University Students

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA) - Initial

RFA NUMBER: EPA-ORD-NRMRL-CI-09-02

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.511 - Office of Research and Development Consolidated Research/Training/Fellowship Programs

DATES: The closing date and time for receipt of hard copy applications or electronic receipt of applications is **May 11, 2009, at 4:30 p.m. EST**. All applications must be post marked or submitted electronically thru email as described in Section IV., by the closing date and time to receive consideration. No late proposals will be accepted.

To allow efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests submittal of an informal notice of an "Intent to Apply," by April 15, 2009. Submission of "Intent to Apply," is optional; it is a process management tool that will allow EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted proposals.

CONTENTS BY SECTION:

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Synopsis of Program

Award Information

Eligibility Information

Application Information

Agency Contact

- I. Funding Opportunity Description and Information
- II. Award Information
- III. Eligibility Information
- IV. Application and Submission Information
- V. Application Review Information
- VI. Award Administration Information
- VII. Agency Contact
- VIII. Other Information

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Synopsis of Program:

The objective of this RFA is to support the training of undergraduate and graduate students in research. The Program will substantially benefit academic training of research scientists and support increased emphasis on the training of future environmental scientists. It is envisioned that the goal of increasing both the

effectiveness and number of future environmental scientists will be achieved by allowing students to collaborate with senior ORD scientists while working in a fully operational federal research laboratory. Research training will be conducted at EPA's facilities in Cincinnati, Ohio, and academic training will be conducted at the home institutions of the students. Some examples of the field of study for desirable student participants include (but are not limited to) those majoring in chemistry, engineering, biology, computer science, physical sciences, life sciences, ecology, and urban planning.

Award Information:

NUMBER OF EXPECTED AWARDS: One

CEILING: EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement for up to \$1,800,000 (an estimated \$600,000 per year for up to 3 years)

COST SHARING OR MATCHING: Not applicable

GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION: Not Applicable

Eligibility Information:

Eligible applicants for programs under CFDA 66.511 each State, territory and possession, and Tribal nation of the United States, including the District of Columbia, public and private State universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, State and local government departments, and other public or private nonprofit institutions and in some cases, individuals who have demonstrated unusually high scientific ability. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive awards. Eligible nonprofit organizations include any organizations that meet the definition of nonprofit in OMB Circular A-122. However, 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. Universities and educational institutions must be subject to OMB Circular A-21.

Application Materials:

Applicants may submit either a hard-copy printed application or an electronic application through email (but not both) for this announcement. Instructions for both forms of submission follow in Sections IV. B. and C. Grant application forms can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>

Agency Contact:

Cynthia Johnson: (513) 569-7873; email: johnson.cynthia@epa.gov

Link to Full Announcement:

<http://www.grants.gov> or <http://www.epa.gov/nrmrl/fundopps/index.html>

**Environmental Protection Agency
National Risk Management Research Laboratory
Research Training Program for College and University Students**

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Research and Development (ORD), National Risk Management Research Laboratory (NRMRL), located at 26 West Martin Luther King Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45268, provides management for the Research Training Program for College and University Students. As the lead collaborating organization NRMRL conducts research to reduce the uncertainty associated with making and implementing risk management decisions. This research focuses on two important areas.

- Characterizing pollutant sources that require management.
- Identifying, developing, and evaluating tools and technologies for prevention, control, restoration, and remediation of environmental problems that are high risk, high cost, or that lack effective management alternatives.

The objective of the training program is to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students year round to conduct research at the Office of Research and Development's (ORD), Cincinnati Organizations (National Risk Management Research Laboratory, National Exposure Research Laboratory (NERL), and National Homeland Security Research Center (NHSRC), while maintaining the necessary classroom focused academic training. The ultimate goal is to produce environmental scientists, and technicians who not only have relevant classroom experience, but also have had a research laboratory experience. Additional background information on collaborating ORD organizations providing training experiences under this RFA can be found at the following sites: NRMRL: <http://www.epa.gov/ORD/NRMRL/>; NERL: <http://www.epa.gov/nerl/>; NHSRC: <http://www.epa.gov/nhsrc/>.

B. Objectives:

The purpose of this announcement is to competitively select a technically and administratively qualified organization to develop and administer a research training program. The program will supplement the academic training of students by enabling them to complete mentored projects in a world class federal research laboratory with EPA scientists. It is envisioned that the goal of increasing both the effectiveness and number of future environmental scientists will be achieved by allowing students to collaborate with senior ORD scientists while working in a fully operational federal research laboratory. Research training will be conducted at EPA's facilities in Cincinnati, Ohio, and academic training will be conducted at the recipient institution. Some examples of the desired areas of study for student participants include, but are not limited to,

chemistry, engineering, biology, computer science, ecology, and urban planning.

The program should provide a year-round training opportunity to allow students to relate hands-on research training with formal academic studies; it will provide invaluable instruction regarding the relevance of academic training to the conduct of research. The most qualified students, based on academic accomplishments and disciplines among other possible criteria, should be targeted for student appointments.

The approach for selecting qualified students on a competitive basis and the criteria used for selection must be provided by the recipient in the application for assistance. Students must be able to participate in research training at identified ORD organizations in Cincinnati, Ohio, while pursuing an academic education. Student mentorships can be conducted at anytime during the calendar year and may be structured to occur in conjunction with the student's academic studies. Approaches for overcoming any logistical problems must be described in the application for assistance.

Within the research themes established for training opportunities, projects suitable for training students will be developed by the recipient faculty working in association with at least one ORD organization staff member (student projects must be approved by the EPA Mentor and the Institution Program Manager). These individuals will be the University Research Advisor (URA) and EPA ORD Mentor, respectively, for the successful student applicant. The applicant should identify how it intends to select the most qualified candidates based on academic accomplishments, field of study, and other criteria. Details of potential projects and necessary qualifications, experience, or other requirements of student applicants will be given to the Program Manager of the recipient organization by ORD organization mentor, through the EPA Project Officer.

Applications for student training positions will be made to the Program Manager who will be responsible for identifying qualified applicants based on qualifications, career interests, experience, recommendations, and academic record and determining any conflicts of interest. The University Research Advisor will be responsible for selecting, from among those recommended by the Program Manager, one or more applicant for student positions.

Within 30 days, each undergraduate will develop, with the University Research Advisor, a personal training plan that outlines the new skills and knowledge that will be expected to be gained, taking into account the student's career needs and background. A copy of this plan will be located in the Program Manager's office.

Students will receive training in laboratory health and safety. Furthermore, it is anticipated that training will be provided in basic laboratory techniques, theory and operation of advanced laboratory instrumentation, computer data base management, computer applications, library data base search techniques, sample preparation, computer model application, as well as many other areas related to laboratory research.

The successful applicant shall propose a single point of contact. This single point of contact is

referred to as the Program Manager (PM) in this request for applications. Use of this title is not required, but an alternative title and responsibilities of the position must be clearly defined. This individual should have a background in a scientific discipline consistent with the research to be proposed along with administrative experience and/or training.

Administrative Responsibilities

Agency Oversight/Participation - The EPA Project Officer is responsible for ensuring that the research training cooperative agreement proceeds as planned and is approved by EPA. Periodic meetings between the EPA project officer and the recipient program manager are essential; periodic, written reports will also be useful in documenting actions and results. It is anticipated that reports will be done on a quarterly basis.

Publicizing Training Opportunities - The recipient is responsible for soliciting students for the research training opportunities in an effort to reach the most qualified and deserving students and appointing a research advisor. The solicitation encourages the recipient organization to employ a national prospective for soliciting student participation. Once students are selected, the ORD organization and recipient research advisor are responsible for ensuring that the research activities performed by the students fulfill the requirements of the research projects and is a beneficial experience for the student. The application for assistance must describe the procedures for soliciting available training opportunities and provide a schedule of fixed stipends for each student type. All issues of student stipends and residential logistics will be the responsibility of the recipient.

Roles and Responsibilities

EPA Project Management: An EPA project officer will be responsible for working with the recipient's program manager to ensure satisfactory progress and direction of the program. The recipient program manager provides trainee selection decisions to the EPA project officer to ensure that all research performed under the terms of this training cooperative agreement relate to ORD research but, in itself, does not provide a product that ORD is obligated to produce.

University Research Advisors (URA): Each student participating in the program will have one advisor and the advisor shall be an employee of the successful applicant or a cooperating college or university. The application for assistance must provide information regarding the qualifications of a research advisor for undergraduates and graduates and their respective responsibilities. The following suggests responsibilities for advisors:

Undergraduate Advisor (UGA): Provides guidance and direction to ensure undergraduates are: following the health and safety requirements of ORD as prescribed by EPA mentors while working at the laboratory; accomplishing the required and relevant electives for their chosen degree, and progressing in studies without undue interference from their research responsibilities.

Graduate Research Advisor (GRA): Provides guidance and oversight to ensure graduates are:

following the health and safety requirements of ORD as prescribed by EPA mentors while working at the laboratory; receiving the necessary resources to accomplish the proposed research; progressing in both research and academic pursuits. Advisors may also participate on graduate committees to determine academic and research requirements for academic degrees and to assess if these requirements were accomplished.

EPA ORD Mentor: The responsibilities of the ORD research mentor include the following, as appropriate for undergraduates and graduates:

- Define the ORD research area and assist in the review/development of research plans;
- Provide oversight of the research activities to ensure health and safety practices are followed and the research plan is followed;
- Provide guidance and instruction, as necessary, assuring the student follows acceptable science methods;
- Provide comments to the university advisor regarding progress of research, problems encountered, and solutions taken;
- Provide guidance and assistance in the preparation of scientific publications;
- Provide an evaluation of the trainee at the end of the term.

Applications must include the criteria for selection of appropriate research mentors and advisors.

C. Environmental Results (EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs):

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. The Cooperative Agreement supports Goal 1, Clean Air and Global Climate, Objective 1.6, Enhance Science and Research; Goal 2, Clean and Safe Water; Objective 2.3, Enhance Science and Research; Goal 3, Land Preservation and Restoration, Objective 3.3, Enhance Science and Research; Goal 4, Healthy Communities and Ecosystems, Objective 4.4, Enhance Science and Research; and Goal 5, Compliance and Environmental Stewardship, Objective 5.4, Enhance Society's Capacity for Sustainability through Science and Research. The recipient, in collaboration with EPA, will conduct a training Research Program for college students designed to increase the student's awareness of issues related to:

- Research in pollution prevention and green chemistry
- Research of biological, physical and chemical remediation
- Ecosystem research
- Environmental research issues related to watersheds
- Environmental research of drinking water and wastewater

2. Environmental Results (outputs/outcomes)

Outputs. The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and 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. Example of expected output include, but are not limited to:

- The training of up to 10-20+ students per year.

Outcomes. The term “outcome” means 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. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of expected outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- Environmental scientists that have the training and experience to immediately enter the workforce upon graduation;
- Environmental scientists who can productively contribute to the understanding of the science needed in the management of risks in the environment;
- Increased diversity of community trained in this field.

Other examples may include: (a) scientific and technical publications in the peer-reviewed literature, (b) attendance and presentations of data at national and international scientific meetings, and (c) data and information essential to conducting engineering studies.

D. Statutory Authorities:

CERCLA Section 311(a) and b(9), Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(5), Clean Water Act, Section 104(g), Safe Drinking Water Act Section 1442, Solid Waste and Disposal Act, Section 8001.

This project will support accomplishment of a public purpose by providing the student population with science-oriented training assignments at EPA facilities.

E. Geospatial Information: Not Applicable

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Anticipated Funding: The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is approximately \$1,800,000 (over a three year period of performance). EPA funding is subject **to the availability of funds.**

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

C. Number of Awards: EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement from this announcement. Funding is anticipated at up to \$600,000 per year for 3 years with maximum potential funding of \$1,800,000 over the three year period of performance. In addition, EPA 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 six months after the original selection date.

D. Project Period: The estimated project period for the award resulting from this solicitation will begin **July 6, 2009 and end July 5, 2012**

E. Anticipated Substantial Federal Involvement: Students in this Program will have one EPA ORD scientist as a research mentor and one university/college scientist appointed by the recipient organization as the formal advisor for research and academic matters. ORD mentors will have professional qualifications similar to those of graduate faculty at a university.

The Program shall include: (a) undergraduate students who will gain research experience by working either as summer interns, or alternating quarters or semesters, or on a part-time basis with EPA ORD organization scientists (mentors), and (b) graduate research assistants, enrolled in Masters or Ph.D. programs, who will receive training in EPA research and will undertake more substantial research projects in collaboration with EPA and university scientists. Research themes for training opportunities will be identified by EPA. These themes will primarily reflect research priorities and funding availability at ORD organizations.

EPA will collaborate with the cooperator in planning and implementation of the Research Apprenticeship Program. The EPA anticipates potential collaboration under this cooperative agreement will include providing the following:

- Assistance planning students' research assignments and matching students and mentors;
- Providing an EPA Cincinnati researchers to act as mentors;
- Providing EPA Cincinnati laboratories and facilities for use as research space for student trainees;
- Involvement in planning of on-site and off-site developmental activities;
- Oversight on the project.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants: CFDA 66.511 OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CONSOLIDATED RESEARCH/TRAINING/FELLOWSHIPS

Programs under CFDA 66.511 are available to each State, territory and possession, and Tribal nation of the United States, including the District of Columbia, for public and private State universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, State and local government departments, and other public or private nonprofit institutions and in some cases, individuals who have demonstrated unusually high scientific ability. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive

awards. Eligible nonprofit organizations include any organizations that meet the definition of nonprofit in OMB Circular A-122. However, 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. Universities and educational institutions must be subject to OMB Circular A-21.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching: N/A

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 Section III.A above) that meet all of the following criteria 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. Administrative Eligibility Criteria:

a. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

b. In addition, applications must be postmarked as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that its application reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.

c. 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. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with **Cynthia Johnson at (513) 569-7873 or by email at johnson.cynthia@epa.gov** as soon as possible after the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in the application not being reviewed.

2. Relevance Eligibility Criteria: Applications that are found administratively acceptable will be subjected to a review for relevancy. Applications must propose a program to support the training of undergraduate and graduate students in research as set forth in Section I.B and Section I.C of this announcement.

3. Other Eligibility Criteria:

a. An applicant must demonstrate in the application package their knowledge and

expertise in training high school students from diverse backgrounds and demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate classroom and laboratory facilities located within commuting distance of the U.S. EPA in Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition, the applicants proposed program must be designed for students that are capable of being available for mentorship in Cincinnati, Ohio. (see Section I.)

b. The application for assistance must describe the procedures for soliciting available training opportunities and provide a schedule of fixed stipends for each student type. Applications must provide the criteria for selection of appropriate research mentors and advisors.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Applicants must submit a complete, detailed application to include all of the documents described in Section IV.A., below regardless of the mode of transmission. Additional guidance on completing the documents is available at EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment (<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/>). Applicants may submit either a hard-copy printed application or an electronic application through email (but not both) for this announcement. Instructions for both forms of submission follow in Sections IV. B. and C.

A. Application Materials:

The application is made through submission of the materials described below. ***It is essential that the application contain all information requested and be submitted in the formats described.*** The application must contain the following items:

1. Application For Federal Assistance (SF-424): Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the SF-424.

This form will be the *first page* of the application. Instructions for completion of the SF-424 are included with the form. (However, note that EPA requires that the entire requested dollar amount appear on the 424, not simply the proposed first year expenses.) The form must contain the original (or electronic) signature of an authorized representative of the applying institution. Please note that both the Principal Investigator and an administrative contact are to be identified in Section 5 of the SF-424. The applicant's DUNS number must be included. (See Section VIII for instructions on obtaining a DUNS number.)

2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A): At a minimum, complete Section B- Budget Information and Section F-Other Budget Information. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of 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.

For purposes of developing project budgets, EPA anticipates providing up to \$600,000 per year for a four year period with a total budget of \$1,800,000. The applicant's budget should be increased by any voluntary cost share being evaluated in Section V.

If amounts are budgeted for subcontracts, provide a description of the work that will be subcontracted and an explanation of why it must be subcontracted. Indicate whether the subcontracts will be awarded competitively or if not, what justification exists to make a non-competitive award.

Describe the basis for calculating the personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual support, and other costs identified in the itemized budget and explain the basis for their calculation. (Special attention should be given to explaining the "travel," "equipment," and "other" categories.) For any proposed equipment, identify any tangible non-expendable personal property to be purchased which has an estimated cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year. (Personal property items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 are considered supplies.) Tips for preparing the budget support can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>.

3. Key Contact List: EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54 should include the Principal, Co-Investigators, and administrative contacts. A copy of this form should also be completed for major sub-agreements (contacts at the institutions of primary co-investigators).

4. Project Narrative and Supporting Documentation: The Project Narrative and Supporting Documentation should be readable in PDF, MS Word or Word Perfect WP6/7/8 for Windows and consolidated into a single file. The project narrative: The applicant's proposal must be submitted in English and must not exceed twenty (20) consecutively numbered (bottom center) 8.5X11-inch pages of single-spaced, standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. This page limitation shall include all text, tables, figures, references, attachments, and appendices. It does not include the materials requested below in items b, c, or d. A detail narrative consisting of the items shall be provided:

a. The project narrative is the technical proposal that discusses the technical approach and organizational capabilities for accomplishing the goals stated under the Funding Opportunity in Section I. In developing the project narrative, the applicant must focus on Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth in Section V and structure the proposal to address each in the order listed.

The description of the research approach, planned outputs, and schedule shall not exceed 20 pages of 12-pt type.

i. Detailed project summary to include a description of technical approach, specific actions, methods, and timelines to be undertaken to carryout the tasks set forth in Section I.B. Include a discussion of the rationale and process for selecting students or partnering with other institutions to include students that have an economic disadvantage or that lack exposure to environmental science/environmental information due to undeveloped

environmental science infrastructure at educational institutions, or to increase geographical diversity. Include a discussion of the applicant's physical location and how it relates to carrying out the objectives.

- ii. Description of potential institutional capability and explanation of the project benefits to the public. Description of the roles of the applicant and proposed partners if any (see Section IV.G).
- iii. Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs. Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the project (See Section I.C), including what measurements will be used to track your progress towards achieving the outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated. Identify the expected project outputs and how progress towards achieving the outputs will be tracked and measured.
- iv. Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.
- v. Description of applicant resources that will be used in performance of the project to further the student's mentoring process.
- vi. Budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task. 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." Applicants should specifically demonstrate the number of students mentor opportunities to be provided within the proposed budget and the fixed amount to be allotted for stipends for each student type.
- vii. Supporting documentation obtained from user organizations in support of RFA objectives and activities.

b. Programmatic Capability Past Performance: A demonstration of the applicant's programmatic capability (separate from the Project Narrative) to successfully complete the proposed project, to include documentation of past performance in meeting the reporting requirements of current or recently completed assistance agreements. Applicants should at a minimum submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements, but not Federal contracts) of similar size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that the applicant's proposed PI and (if applicable) co-PIs have undertaken in the past five years. Include the title, the Principal Investigator, the total amount funded, the project period, a brief (1-3 lines) description of the project, and the record of resulting peer reviewed publications. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected environmental results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. Provide a point of contact in the primary

sponsor's organization with email address and telephone. The information provided will be used by the Agency in conjunction with other readily available information to evaluate the applicant's programmatic capability with respect to past performance.

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 an applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and the application will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. If there is no response from an applicant for these items, it may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

c. Attachments: The following attachments will not be counted against the 20 page limitation set forth in Section 4.a. Other attachments will count against the 20-page limit.

1. Resumes (biographical sketch). Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.
2. Support Letters (if applicable). Specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.
3. Certifications and Disclosures.

All required grant certifications and disclosures shall be provided with the application. Certifications and disclosures can be obtained from the Office of Grant and Debarment website at www.epa.gov/ogd

- ASSURANCES NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS CERTIFICATION
- CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING and SF LLL (Applicable if EPA funds are over \$100,000)
- EPA FORM 4700-4 PRE-AWARD COMPLIANCE REVIEW REPORT
- QUALITY ASSURANCE NARRATIVE STATEMENT, if applicable
- COPY OF NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT
- KEY CONTACTS FORM
- COMPLETE APPLICATION RECEIPT LETTER (If you want to receive notification of receipt)

B. Submission Instructions for Printed Hard-Copy Applications:

Submit a complete application including all of the supporting documents identified in Section IV.A of this announcement to the following address. The complete application *must be* sent through regular mail, express mail, or a major courier and be postmarked by the closing date identified therein, **May 11, 2009**.

US Environmental Protection Agency
National Risk Management Research Laboratory
ATTN: **Cynthia Johnson (Announcement EPA-ORD-NRMRL-CI-09-02)**
26 W. Martin Luther King Drive
Cincinnati OH 45268

Because of security concerns, applications cannot be personally delivered. To be considered timely, printed applications must be post marked by 4:30 p.m. local time and mailed to the location above by the U.S. Postal Service or a major courier. Applications post marked after the deadline will not be considered and will be returned to the submitter. Printed hard-copy applications, including all documents stated in Section IV.A. above, must be submitted in the **original with 4 copies as set forth above** and should be double-sided. Grant application forms can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>

C. Submission Instructions for Electronic Applications Using Email:

Email submissions must be addressed to johnson.cynthia@epa.gov and include, “Research Training Program for College and University Students – [name of applicant] in the subject line. All required documents listed in Section IV.A of the announcement must be attached to the email as separate Adobe PDF files. Please note that if you choose to submit your materials via e-mail, you are accepting all risks attendant to email submission including server delays. [Email submissions exceeding 15MB will experience delays and may not be received on time by the Agency. For these size submissions, applicants should submit their application materials via hardcopy or else they may be received late and not considered for funding.](#)

D. Submission Dates and Times:

All applications must be postmarked or received electronically via email on or before **May 11, 2009, 4:30 p.m. EST**. Proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

E. Intergovernmental Review:

Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,” does not apply to the Office of Research and Development's research and training programs unless EPA has determined that the activities that will be carried out under the applicants' proposal (a) require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or (b) do not require an EIS but will be newly initiated at a particular site and require unusual measures to limit the possibility of adverse exposure or hazard to the general public, or (c) have a unique geographic focus and are directly relevant to the governmental responsibilities of a State or local government within that geographic area.

If EPA determines that Executive Order 12372 applies to an applicant's proposal, the applicant must follow the procedures in 40 CFR Part 29. The applicant must notify their state's single point of contact (SPOC). To determine whether their state participates in this process, and how to comply, applicants should consult <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>. If an applicant is in a State that does not have a SPOC, or the State has not selected research and development grants for intergovernmental review, the applicant must notify directly affected State, area-wide, regional and local entities of its proposal.

EPA will notify the successful applicant(s) if Executive Order 12372 applies to its proposal prior to award.

F. Funding Restrictions:

Funding of the first year of the award is anticipated to be up to \$600,000 per year and each additional year for total EPA funding of up to \$1,800,000. All EPA funding is contingent upon availability of funds and satisfactory performance during the budget period.

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, 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 similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

G. 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/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application 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/application.

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.

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/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application 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/application if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application 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 proposed subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors during the proposal/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

H. Modifications to this Announcement:

Modifications to this announcement will be posted on grants.gov under this Funding Opportunity Number and the due date for applications will be extended if deemed appropriate.

I. Confidentiality:

By submitting an application in response to this solicitation, the applicant grants the EPA permission to make limited disclosures of the application to technical reviewers both within and outside the Agency for the express purpose of assisting the Agency with evaluating the application. Information from a pending or unsuccessful application will be kept confidential to the fullest extent allowed under law; information from a successful application may be publicly disclosed to the extent permitted by law.

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal package as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions thereof that 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/applications are considered confidential and protected from disclosure prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

J. Pre-proposal/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

Each application that meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Section III will be subjected to technical and programmatic reviews. The technical review will be conducted by a panel consisting of at least two non-EPA reviewers and one EPA reviewer who are able to demonstrate expertise and a lack of any conflict of interest. The purpose is to evaluate the merit of the proposal and the capability of the applicant to complete the project as proposed. The programmatic review will be conducted by other qualified EPA personnel who are able to demonstrate a lack of any conflict of interest. The purpose is to evaluate the applicant's past performance in conducting projects of similar size, scope and relevance.

The following criteria will be used in the evaluation process:

A. Evaluation Criteria:

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal submittal. Each application will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

Technical Evaluation Criteria (100 Points)

1. Adequacy of Technical Approach (45)

- a. The activities that are proposed to address the RFA focus identified in Section I
 - i. The proposed project and approach taken demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives of this cooperative program including the ability to actively manage and participate in the mentorship of the students gaining environmental experience at EPA's Cincinnati, Ohio, facilities. Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the extent to which the applicant's physical location will affect its ability to successfully achieve the objectives of this announcement as described in Section I and provide adequate classroom and laboratory facilities located within commuting distance of US EPA Cincinnati, Ohio, facilities. **(10)**
 - i. The applicant adequately describes specific objectives of the proposed project which are consistent with the purpose and objectives of the cooperative agreement and which are measurable. **(10)**
 - ii. The applicant's detailed technical approach and methods for conducting the proposed project include a discussion of the rationale and process for selecting students or partnering with other institutions to include students that have an economic disadvantage or that lack exposure to environmental science/environmental information due to undeveloped

environmental science infrastructure at educational institutions, or to increase geographical and academic diversity. Applicant is expected to describe how it will employ a national perspective to solicit students from multiple institutions to provide geographic diversity. (20)

b. The extent and quality to which the proposal narrative addresses Section I, Part C. (Environmental Results-EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs) will be evaluated. Proposals should describe the evaluative component of the project, including how the applicant's success in achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs, including technical specifics will be tracked and measured. (5)

2. Adequacy and Availability of proposed key personnel (20). The expertise and qualifications of proposed staff and their availability and commitment to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (Include key and support personnel, including formal education, training, licenses, or other relevant training as it relates to expertise in conducting and/or overseeing activities described in Section I).

3. Recipient resources that will be available to complement the mentorship experience (5). Describe any applicant resources (i.e., classroom and laboratory facilities, supplies, training) as it relates to furthering the learning experience of participating students.

4. Budget: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on:

The extent applicants demonstrate sufficient utilization of budgeted resources necessary to conduct the activities set forth in Section I, inclusive of the appropriateness of the schedule of fixed stipends for each student type and the ability to maximize the number of student mentor opportunities. (10)

5. Past Performance—Programmatic Capability and Reporting on Environmental Results (20):

Past Performance--Programmatic Capability: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the applicant's technical ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicants: **(i)** past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance agreements (**assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts**) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years, **(ii)** history of meeting reporting requirements on federally funded assistance agreements (**assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts**) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, and **(iii)** past performance in documenting and/or reporting on progress towards achieving the expected environmental results

(outcomes and outputs) under federally funded assistance agreements (**assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts**) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project within the last 3 years; and, if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not.

Organizations that have no relevant or available past performance and/or reporting information will be given a neutral rating for those criteria. In evaluating applicants under this criterion the Agency may consider information from other sources including agency files (e.g., the EPA's Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant.

B. Review and Selection Process:

Evaluation Review Process: The eligibility review discussed in Section III will be conducted by EPA personnel who are not part of the technical review panel. The technical review panel, which reviews the technical proposal for scientific merit and organizational capabilities, shall consist of at least one internal EPA reviewer and at least two non-EPA reviewers who are able to demonstrate technical expertise and a lack of any conflict of interest. The technical review panel will review the proposal against the criteria (Criterion 1 -4) above identified as Evaluation Criteria and rank the proposal based upon this evaluation. The programmatic review panel will consist of one or more EPA personnel who are not part of the technical evaluation panel and who are able to demonstrate a lack of any conflict of interest. The programmatic reviewer(s) will review the proposal against Criterion 5 as identified as Programmatic Evaluation Criteria above and rank the proposals based upon this evaluation. The results of the Technical and Programmatic Evaluations will be combined to determine the overall ranking of each evaluated applicant.

Source Selection: EPA will make a selection of the applicant for award based upon the combined rankings of the technical and programmatic reviews as discussed above. EPA may negotiate changes to the proposal with the selected applicant so long as they do not affect the integrity of the competition. For example, EPA will discuss significant comments received from the technical reviewers, aspects of the budget that may be questionable, the proposed terms and conditions for the agreement, and the nature and extent of EPA collaboration. The Decision Official is an Office of Research and Development (ORD) manager who will determine which applicant should receive the award.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates: The anticipated award date is **June 29, 2009.**

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices: Notice of award will be made in writing by an official in the EPA Grants Administration Division. Preliminary selection by the Decision Official in the Office of Research and Development does not guarantee an award will be made. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. No commitment

on the part of EPA should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with an EPA Program Official. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the EPA Grants Award Official does so at their own risk.

B. 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://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Agency Contact identified in Section VII.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Regulations and OMB Coverage:

Grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations are subject to 40 CFR Parts 30 and 40 and OMB Circular A-122 for non-profits and A-21 for institutions of higher learning.

Grants and agreements with state, local, and tribal governments are subject to 40 CFR Parts 31 and 40 and OMB Circular A-87.

Data Access and Information Release: 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.

DUNS Number: Grant applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B), Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. OMB has determined that there is a need for improved statistical reporting of Federal grants and cooperative agreements. Use of the DUNS number government-wide will provide a means to identify entities receiving those awards and their business relationships. The identifier will be used for tracking purposes, and to validate address and point of contact information.

A DUNS number will be required whether an applicant is submitting a paper application or using the government-wide electronic portal (Grants.gov). The DUNS number will supplement other identifiers required by statute or regulation, such as tax identification numbers. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 186667055711. Individuals who would personally receive a grant or cooperative agreement award from the Federal government apart from any business or non-profit organization they may operate are exempt from this requirement. The website where an

organization can obtain a DUNS number is: <http://www.dnb.com>

Non-profit Administrative Capability: 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.

D. Programmatic Terms and Conditions: Terms and conditions will be negotiated with the selected recipient covering the following requirements:

- The nature and extent of collaboration between EPA and the recipient.
- OBM clearance shall be obtained prior to the collection of identical information from 10 or more non-Federal respondents.

Reporting Requirements:

1. **Quarterly Progress Report**

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. Quarterly reports shall be submitted no later than 15 calendar days after the end of the quarter and shall contain the following:

- Narrative discussion of activities conducted during the quarter and progress and findings to date
- Expenditures/schedules (planned and actual)
- Revised schedule/milestones if appropriate
- Appendices, including meeting reports, trip reports, etc.

2. **Final Report**

The final report shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved and expenditures of the project or activity. In addition, the final report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

The agency contact for this RFA is Cynthia Johnson at 26 W. Martin Luther King Drive,

Cincinnati OH 45268; telephone (513) 569-7873

E-mail: johnson.cynthia@epa.gov (applications may not be submitted via email)

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Questions: Questions about this RFA should be submitted in writing by **April 22, 2009**. Do not attempt to seek information regarding this RFA from any source other than that identified in Section VII. Questions that are considered significant will be answered via a posting to ORD/NRMRL's website at the following URL:

<http://www.epa.gov/nrmrl/fundopps/index.html>

Modifications: All changes to the RFA's content will be done so by official amendment. All amendments will be posted at the following URL:

<http://www.epa.gov/nrmrl/fundopps/index.html>

All references to applicant in this solicitation refer to organizations submitting proposals. References to successful applicant refer to the recipient organization that will be awarded the research training cooperative agreement.