

**REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS:
REGION 7 REGIONAL GEOGRAPHIC INITIATIVE PROJECTS
EPA-R7RGAD-04-006**

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

A. Federal Agency Name - Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7

Funding Opportunity Title - Region 7 Regional Geographic Initiative projects.

Announcement Type - This is a request for initial proposals.

Funding Opportunity Number - EPA-R7RGAD-04-006

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number - 66.610: Surveys, Studies, Investigations, and Special Purpose Grants within the Office of the Administrator, authorized under Delegation of Authority I-47.

Dates - Applications must be submitted to the Regional Office by May 25, 2004. Applicants selected through initial proposal phase will be notified to submit a full fundable application by July 15, 2004, for award.

B. Executive Summary - EPA Region 7 is soliciting initial proposals to implement the Region's strategic priorities: critical ecosystems, sensitive populations, and agriculture. The critical ecosystem priority focuses on facilitating the protection and/or restoration of ecosystems in Region 7, which are critical to biodiversity, human quality of life, and/or landscape functions. The sensitive populations priority focuses on reducing environmental and health risks to children, older adults, and people with chronic illness. The agriculture priority focuses on developing partnerships and projects in the agriculture community emphasizing cleaner air, purer water, and better protected land.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

1. Funding Opportunity Description

EPA Region 7 is soliciting initial proposals which address the regional strategic priorities utilizing the Regional Geographic Initiative program. Regional Geographic Initiative grants fund unique, geographically-based projects that support the Agency's ability to protect human health and the environment. These projects may address places, sectors or innovative projects, and focus on the regional strategic priorities of critical ecosystems, sensitive populations, and agriculture. These projects may also address problems that: are multi-media in nature; demonstrate state, local, and/or other stakeholder participation; identify

opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding; or support smart growth planning in communities. Smart growth projects are those focused on improving the quality of life in communities by integrating the tenets of ecology, equity and management by citizens.

Agriculture - Proposed projects should involve surveys, studies, investigations, special purpose projects, related to agricultural/environmental issues.

Sensitive Populations - Proposed projects should involve surveys, studies, investigations, and special purpose projects related to sensitive populations. Sensitive populations include children (prenatal through age 21), older adults (65 plus years of age with 85 plus years of age designated as particularly fragile), and chronically ill (such as respiratory ailments and compromised immune systems).

Critical Ecosystems - Proposed projects should involve surveys, investigations, special purpose projects, applied studies and/or application development related to the identification and/or assessment of regional ecosystems.

Successful applicants should focus proposals on one or more of the following project ideas:

- Environmental planning or environmental projects that support community revitalization. Highest priority is communities with ongoing or completed remediation of sites with environmental contamination.
- Community education and outreach activities to address all cultural communities within an identified geographic area with lead contamination. Education and outreach activities include lead poisoning health information and prevention measures.
- Projects initiated by community-based organizations engaged in constructive and collaborative problem-solving to find solutions to their community's environmental and/or public health concerns
- Source water protection/pollution prevention pilot projects focused on keeping contaminants out of sources of drinking water.
- Educate and inform migrant and seasonal workers, not covered under FIFRA work protection standards, on safe handling of chemicals.
- Determine human health impacts through assessment of homes in older residential neighborhoods, which previously had natural gas meters with mercury regulators removed from inside the home.
- Examine impacts of pesticides used on traditional row crops on new and emerging crops.
- Evaluate effectiveness of best management practices for pesticides and herbicide use. Evaluate effectiveness of best management practices for reducing nutrient loading to receiving waterbodies.
- Projects focused on biomass technologies such as production of biomass feedstocks and waste stream utilization practices.
- Reconnection of communities to the Missouri River through hands-on

- restoration activities, education, and improved public access.
- Focusing on ecological resource analyses, irreplaceability/recoverability analyses, and risk assessments, identify critical ecosystem in terrestrial environments for Region 7 ecoregions. Utilizing aquatic gap methodology and an aquatic ecological classification framework, identify riverine critical ecosystems for Region 7 ecoregions.
 - Using geospatial analysis methods, including the use of satellite digital data, study and assess long-term ecosystem changes caused by complex physical, biological, and human interactions in a dynamic metropolitan environment.
 - Education and assistance for communities to identify and/or gain reductions on air toxics in geographic areas that are not in compliance with national ambient air quality standards

2. Award Information

EPA Region 7 plans to award a varied number of grants or cooperative agreements. Funding available to the Region is expected to be between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000 with individual grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

The number of awards will depend on individual proposal cost; the final aggregate amount of federal funding for all Initial Proposals; and the total amount of federal funding available.

Should additional funding become available for award the Agency may award additional grants based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process, without further notice or competition.

3. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants - Assistance under this program is available to States, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private non-profit institutions, individuals. 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. For profit organizations are not eligible for funding. Some of EPA's statutes may limit assistance to specific types of interested applicants.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching - There are no cost share requirements for these projects.

C. Other Eligibility Requirements

Preliminary Eligibility Screening Requirements - To be eligible for consideration, applicants **must meet** all of the following criteria. Failure to meet the following criteria will result in the automatic disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration:

1. Be an applicant who is eligible to receive funding under this announcement.
2. The proposal must address one or more of the Regional Strategic Priorities: agriculture, sensitive populations and/or critical ecosystems.
3. The proposal must meet all format and content requirements contained in this notice.
4. The proposal must comply with the directions for submittal contained in this notice.

4. Proposal and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package - Standard Form 424 may be obtained from the following website: <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/appforms.htm> or by contacting Toni Gargas at the number/address listed in this announcement.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission - Initial proposals should be limited to five pages (not including Standard Form SF-424, and SF-424A and Cover Page). Page size should be 8 ½ x 11 inches with font size of 12 points or larger. Full application packages should not be submitted at this time. The following format should be used for all initial proposals submitted:

- Completed Page 1 of Standard Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.
- Completed Page 2 of Standard Form SF-424A, Budget Information-Section B (See Allowable Cost section below).
- Statement regarding whether this proposal is a continuation of a previously funded project, if so, please provide the assistance number and status of the current grant/cooperative agreement.
- Cover Page including: Project Title; Name of Applicant; Project Contact; Regional Priority(ies) Addressed; Geographic Location; and Community/Target Audience.
- Project narrative containing: Project Goals (describe in measurable terms the environmental or human health issue to be addressed and how it will address the purpose(s) of the category chosen); Project Tasks (outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals); Schedule (when you expect to complete significant steps and milestones). Describe how the project will address: places, sectors or innovative projects; be based on one or more of the regional strategic priorities of critical ecosystems, sensitive populations, and agriculture; address problems that are multi-media in

- nature; demonstrate state, local, and/or other partner participation; and/or identify opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding.
- Project Results/Evaluation (describe how you will measure and evaluate the results of your project, and how the proposed project meets the Evaluation Criteria specified in this announcement).
 - Detailed itemization of the amounts budgeted by individual Object Class Categories (see Allowable Cost section below).
 - Brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of workers and staff qualifications (no resumes are required).
 - Brief description of the applicant organization, experience related to the area of interest (critical ecosystems, sensitive populations, and/or agriculture), and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to implement the proposed project.

C. Submission Dates and Times - EPA will consider all initial proposals which are post-marked by the U.S. Postal Service, hand-delivered, or electronically delivered to the Agency, or include official delivery service documentation indicating EPA acceptance from a delivery service, **on or before 5 p.m. Central Time, May 25, 2004**. Electronic submittals are preferred. Initial proposals received after the due date will not be considered for funding. All initial proposals should be e-mailed, mailed, or delivered to:

Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Attention: Toni Gargas
PLMG/POIS
901 N. 5th St.
Kansas City, KS 66101
email: gargas.toni@epa.gov

D. Intergovernmental Review - Applicants should be aware that formal requests for assistance may be subject to intergovernmental review under Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. Both proposals and formal requests for funding are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); this means that anyone can request, and receive copies of them.

E. Funding Restrictions

Allowable Costs - EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to

applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87; A-122; and A-21, as appropriate. Ineligible costs will be reduced from final grant award.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Confidential Business Information - Applicants should clearly mark information contained in their proposal which they consider confidential business information. EPA reserves the right to make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR, Subpart B. If no such claim accompanies the proposal when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the applicant.

Pre-Application Assistance - None planned.

5. Proposal Review Information

A. Criteria

All responsive proposals, those that meet all eligibility criteria listed in the Preliminary Eligibility Screening Requirements section, will be reviewed, evaluated and ranked by a selected panel of EPA reviewers based on the following evaluation criteria.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

1. The proposal has clearly stated measurable goals and objectives. Description of how meeting the goals and objectives will address the environmental or human health issue(s) and achieve environmental results. (20 pts)
2. Multi-media approach (air, land, water, pollution prevention, etc) and replicable or transferable to other communities, locations, sectors. (20 pts)
3. Importance of the environmental or human health issue(s) to be addressed to the community(ies) or target audience(s). How applicant and partners are currently involved with the community(ies) or audience(s) that will be impacted or engaged. Partnerships in place to accomplish the project. Examples of commitment and experience of applicant and/or partnership that support the ability to conduct the proposed project. (15 pts)
4. Proposal relevance to one or more of the project ideas listed and clear linkage to one or more of the Regional Priorities (ie. Agriculture, Sensitive Populations, and Critical Ecosystems). (15 pts)
5. Description of the financial needs of the proposed project, identify funds/resources that have been committed or will be committed, and describe how this grant will stimulate the availability of other funding sources. (15 pts)
6. Ability to manage this grant or describe the system in place to hire the requisite experience. Applicant's history of managing federal funds. If applicant is, or has been, a recipient of an EPA grant/cooperative agreement, provide

information regarding compliance with quarterly progress reports, reporting measures, and annual financial status reporting. (15 pts).

Proposals are evaluated by the quality of the submission related to the above criteria. The last criterion does not add value in the rating process for prior grant recipients to give an automatic advantage over new applicants. The last criterion, does, in cases of inadequate and inappropriate prior grant performance, lower an applicant's ranking; it allows consideration of poor past performance in the evaluation of current grant proposals.

B. Selection Process - The funding decision will be made from the group of top rated initial proposals based on the following additional factors:

1. Geographical distribution of funds; and
2. Distribution across Region 7; Regional Strategic Priorities; and EPA strategic goals and objectives.

An applicant whose proposal is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10). **EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and work plan content prior to award.** In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

Selection Official - Final selection of initial proposals will be made by the Region 7 Regional Administrator.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

6. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notification - The Region 7 EPA office will mail acknowledgments to applicants upon receipt of the proposal. Once initial proposals have been reviewed, evaluated, and ranked, applicants will be notified regarding the outcome of the competition.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted on the Region 7 EPA website address: http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7_grant_opportunities.htm at the conclusion of the competition. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Statutory Authority and Applicable Regulations - These projects are subject to EPA's General Grant Regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 "Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations"; 40 CFR Part 31 "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments"; and 40 CFR Part 35 "State and Local Assistance", as applicable.

Dispute Resolution Process - Procedures at 40 CFR 30.63 and 40 CFR 31.70 apply.

C. Reporting - The successful applicant(s) will be required to submit to EPA quarterly performance reports, to illustrate their progress and document any issues or challenges, and a final report. An EPA Project Officer will work with the applicant to achieve the project goals and to provide necessary technical assistance.

7. Agency Contacts

- Toni Gargas at gargas.toni@epa.gov telephone (913) 551-7193, Fax (913) 551-9193
- Karen Flournoy at flournoy.karen@epa.gov telephone (913) 551-7782, Fax (913) 551-7976
- Kathy Finazzo, Region 7 Competition Advocate, at finazzo.kathy@epa.gov telephone (913) 551-7833, Fax (913) 551-9833