

## OVERVIEW SECTION

**AGENCY:** ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

**TITLE:** REMOVAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM

**ACTION:** Request for Applications (RFA) - Initial Announcement

**RFA NO:** EPA-OLEM-OEM-19-08

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO.:** 66.813

**DATES:** The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **June 10, 2020**, 11:59 p.m. (ET). Applications must be submitted electronically through <https://www.grants.gov> by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on **June 10, 2020** to receive consideration. Applications received after 11:59 p.m. (ET) on **June 10, 2020**, will not be considered. Please refer to *Section 4* for further details.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible entities to promote the participation of individual State and territorial programs in research activities with the mission of advocating for and supporting State emergency response readiness and removal program planning and preparedness.

**FUNDING/AWARDS:** The estimated funding available under this competitive opportunity is approximately \$500,000, subject to the availability of funds, quality of Applications received and other applicable considerations. EPA anticipates award of one cooperative agreement resulting from this announcement. (*Refer to Section II.*)

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**COVID-19 Update:** EPA is providing flexibilities to applicants experiencing challenges related to COVID-19. Please see the **Flexibilities Available to Organizations Impacted by COVID-19** clause in Section IV of [EPA's Solicitation Clauses](#).

## **SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Background.**

The Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), §311(c)) (Hazardous Substance Research) authorizes the Administrator to "conduct and support, through grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts, research with respect to the detection, assessment, and evaluation of the effects on and risks to human health of hazardous substances and detection of hazardous substances in the environment." As required by statute, all research must relate to hazardous substances; funding is restricted to "research" as defined at 40 CFR 30.2 (dd). EPA has interpreted "research" under CERCLA §311(c) to include a study that extends to socioeconomic, institutional, and public policy issues, as well as the natural sciences.

CERCLA provides at §104(a)(1): Whenever (a) any hazardous substance is released or there is a substantial threat of such release into the environment, or (b) there is a release or substantial threat of release into the environment of any pollutant or contaminant which may present an imminent and substantial danger to the public health or welfare, the President is authorized to act, consistent with the national contingency plan, to remove or arrange for the removal of, and provide for remedial action relating to such hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant at any time (including its removal from any contaminated natural resource), or take any other response measure consistent with the national contingency plan which the President deems necessary to protect the public health or welfare or the environment, The program that accomplishes this is more commonly known as Superfund.

CERCLA provides under §121(f) "State Involvement" for substantial and meaningful involvement by each State in initiation, development, and selection of remedial actions to be undertaken in that State. EPA has regulated the §121(f) requirement through 40 CFR Part 300, the national contingency plan (NCP), specifically Subpart F of that Plan. State governments play an important role in emergency response and removal activities. They are often the first responders at the scene of a release. The NCP outlines the requirements for State involvement as the lead in non-time critical removals or, as the support agency in all phases of Superfund response actions (including emergencies).

CERCLA, as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986, stipulates federal and State roles in environmental remediation. In essence, Congress assigned roles for both EPA and States in these processes. Under CERCLA, States with the capacity to carry out a response action may be authorized to lead certain cleanup efforts at a Superfund site. SARA strengthens the partnership between the Federal and State governments by allowing more State involvement in Superfund activities.

EPA is required to take into account applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs) in State statutes when overseeing cleanup and abide by State laws. EPA assists States

by providing technical guidance and financial assistance, issuing regulations, and implementing programs.

Under CERCLA §128(a), grants are provided to States and Tribes for their response programs. The States and Tribes act as co-regulators/co-implementers with EPA. The State/Tribal programs address contaminated sites that do not require Federal action but need cleanup before the sites are considered ready for reuse.

The purpose of the cooperative agreement to be awarded under this RFA is to promote research of hazardous substance detection, assessment, and evaluation of the effects on and risks to human health and the environment as well as methods to respond to environmental emergencies as related to State and territorial emergency response and removal programs. The proposed work is critical for the States as they continue to enhance their expertise in environmental emergency response, hazardous substance removal actions, and planning and preparedness.

## **B. Project Description.**

The recipient will provide the necessary framework for the participation of individual State and territorial programs in research activities with the mission of advocating for and supporting State emergency response and removal action programs, to enhance these programs' readiness capabilities to perform emergency response and removal actions that address immediate risks to human health and the environment resulting from the release or potential release of hazardous substances. This will help to enhance the partnership between the States and EPA in implementation of emergency response and removal actions, as well as to facilitate effective transition of sites to States for further actions.

### **1. Research:**

Among specific tasks described under the agreement are to conduct research regarding the planning and preparedness resources and capabilities of State environmental emergency response and removal programs, and to research core State program elements, protocols, strategies and methodologies associated with each of these programs in relation to other States and territories. EPA anticipates these activities will include, but not be limited to preparing research reports that will assist State programs with:

- Study and analysis of planning and preparedness capabilities to respond to environmental emergencies at the state level;
- Researching strategies and best practices for building, maintaining, and growing capabilities in the area of environmental emergency response;
- Efforts and activities that some states undertake that could be of value to other states;
- Timely response operations and cleanups;
- Researching alternative or innovative treatment technologies or response practices to protect human health and the environment after natural disasters;

- Analyzing response actions to assess and identify best practices for achieving timely and effective environmental cleanup during emergency responses and removals;
- Incorporating new and emerging science into cleanup program activities that will be undertaken at Removal sites;
- Promoting coordination of information and partnership with co-regulators (e.g., EPA, local government, tribes) to provide for more effective emergencies and removals;
- Promoting dissemination of information to more effectively manage sites;
- Coordinate research products, analyses, briefings and other information with other recipients of EPA financial assistance to provide more comprehensive information for States to use in their emergency response and cleanup programs; and
- Provide travel assistance for State employees who participate in the research, or who use the research provided by the recipient, to represent the interests of State co-regulators in discussions with EPA on emergency response and removal policies, guidance or similar matters that impact States.

Following analysis and discussions, the recipient will provide briefings and written reports to help other States with emergency response and removal actions.

The recipient will develop a workplan, with milestones, to address the specific subject area, conduct regular teleconferences and meetings to review progress, make presentations at larger State or EPA meetings, and publish reports of findings and results.

States may decide that other subject areas are appropriate for research. The recipient must consult with EPA to ensure that the subject areas are within the scope of work for the cooperative agreement and that adequate funding is available to conduct the research.

## **2. Coordination of research results and other information**

EPA supports work with States to evaluate State cleanup programs and assess how to improve cleanup programs, including EPA-State interactions. It is critical that research that will help to redirect and improve existing State emergency response and cleanup programs resulting from this agreement be shared with States and possibly others. This agreement will support a variety of efforts to share information developed by the recipient and engage in dialogue on issues of importance to the States' role in the emergency and removal program. The recipient must effectively communicate findings to the wider State audience.

Efforts to support this coordination shall include, at a minimum

- Posting the research reports and information obtained from research on the internet;
- Discussing the results and research findings at meetings or other forums;

Coordination and sharing of information shall include, at a minimum:

- Sharing and exchanging information with and between States;
- Working with co regulators (e.g., EPA, tribes, local government) to conduct research;

- Participation in a variety of meetings to provide or conduct research on State cleanup programs and State relations.
- Use of technologies to disseminate information

### C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage

The projects selected for award through this competition will support progress towards EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan Goal 1 (A Cleaner, Healthier Environment: Deliver a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment for all Americans and future generations by carrying out the agency's core mission.)

(View EPA's Strategic Plan online at: <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/fy-2018-2022-epa-strategic-plan>.)

### D. Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA requires that all grant applicants and recipients adequately address environmental outcomes and outputs. Outcomes and outputs differ both in their nature and in how they are measured. Recipients must discuss environmental outcomes and outputs in their proposed work plan.

1. **Outcomes:** The term "outcomes" refer to 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; must be qualitative or quantitative, and may not necessarily be achievable during the project period.

EPA anticipates that outcomes from the project to be awarded under this announcement will include:

- Increased efficiency of State emergency response and removal programs as a result of the information and knowledge shared by the recipient.
- Improved State technical expertise to address emergency response and removal challenges through the results of research products developed by the recipient.
- Incorporation of State perspectives into national program consideration of technological, regulatory or policy barriers to effective programs.
- Improved program coordination and collaboration among the States, and between States and Federal agencies (both regionally and nationally) to improve implementation of emergency response and removal programs.

2. **Outputs:** The term "output" refers to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work products related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs must be measurable during the project period.

The EPA anticipates outputs from projects awarded under this competitive opportunity will include, but not be limited to:

- Development and dissemination of resource documents and tools to assist States in enhancing and improving their emergency response and removal programs.
- State feedback on federal regulations and policies under development; and
- Increased opportunities for dialogue between States, territories, and federal agencies to address issues of mutual concern.

## **E. Supplementary Information**

The statutory authority for this action is the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), § 311 (b) and § 311(c).

## **SECTION II – AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. What is the amount of available funding?**

The total estimated funding available under this competitive opportunity is \$500,000 subject to the availability of funds, quality of Applications received, EPA discretion and other applicable considerations. In FY20, and each successive year of the agreement, the maximum funding available shall not exceed \$100,000 per year for up to 5 years.

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

### **B. How many grants will EPA award through this competition?**

EPA anticipates award of one cooperative agreement under this competitive opportunity. The cooperative agreement awarded under this competition will be funded incrementally subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for this project will include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results.
2. Collaborating during performance of the scope of work.
3. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of

proposed procurements.

4. Reviewing qualifications of key personnel. (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient).
5. Reviewing and commenting on content of printed or electronic publications prepared under the cooperative agreement. (The final decision on the content of publications/reports rests with the recipient.)
6. Reviewing outputs and outcomes to ensure substantial progress has been made in accordance with the cooperative agreement terms and conditions.

**C. What is the project period for award(s) resulting from this solicitation?**

The estimated start date for projects resulting from this solicitation is September 2020. All project activities must be completed within the maximum negotiated project performance period of five years.

**D. Will applications be partially funded?**

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.

**SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION AND THRESHOLD CRITERIA**

**A. Eligible Entities**

Assistance under this program is generally 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 nonprofit institutions, and individuals. In some instances, EPA will consider applications from profit makers, proposing projects with significant technical merit and relevance to EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management, Office of Emergency Management. Nonprofit organizations described in § 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in § 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. For certain competitive funding opportunities under this assistance listing (CFDA) description, the Agency may limit eligibility to compete to a number or subset of eligible applicants consistent with the Agency's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy.

**B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

CERCLA 311(b)(3) requires EPA to enter into appropriate cost sharing arrangements to the maximum extent possible. The Agency has determined that applicants must agree to share a

minimum of 5 percent of total project costs to be eligible to submit a proposal under this RFP. The successful applicant must meet this requirement with eligible and allowable training costs under CERCLA 311(b)(3) and (9) or research costs under CERCLA 311(c).

### **C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

Applications must meet the following “threshold criteria,” **by the time of application submission**. Threshold criteria are evaluated on a pass/fail basis. Only those applications that **specifically address and pass Items 1-5 below** will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria in *Section V.A.* of this announcement. **Applications that fail to meet any one of the threshold criteria will not be considered further.**

EPA will notify applicants who do not meet the threshold criteria within 15 calendar days of the “fail” determination. Applications that meet the threshold criteria will then be evaluated based on the factors disclosed in *Section V.A), Evaluation Criteria*. The threshold criteria are:

1. Applications must address an acceptable project as described in *Section I.B), Project Description* of this announcement.
2. Applications must specifically demonstrate how the applicant has an established organizational structure to meaningfully engage State emergency response and removal program experts in the proposed research, and an ability to widely disseminate information across all States and territories.
3. Federal funds requested may not exceed \$500,000 over five years, or \$100,000 per year. **This excludes any leveraging or cost share.** Applications requesting assistance funding in excess of these values will not be considered. Applications which do not provide the required 5 percent non-Federal cost share/match will be deemed ineligible.
4. Applications must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in *Section IV.B.* of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in *Section IV.D.* with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
5. Applications must be submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) as specified in *Section IV.B.* of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in *Section IV.A.*), on or before the proposal submission deadline published in *Section IV.B.* of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in *Section IV.B.* of this announcement to ensure that their proposal is timely submitted.

**Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical**

**problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant [SAM.gov](#) system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](#) or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission.** Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not Grants.gov) within 30 days of the proposal deadline, please contact **Ellen Treimel at (202) 564-0557 or [treimel.ellen@epa.gov](mailto:treimel.ellen@epa.gov)**. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

6. Ineligible activities: If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

## **SECTION IV –APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures**

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to [Grants.gov](#), the applicant must contact [OMS-ARM-OGDWaivers@epa.gov](mailto:OMS-ARM-OGDWaivers@epa.gov) or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

<b>Mailing Address:</b> OGD Waivers c/o Jessica Durand USEPA Headquarters William Jefferson Clinton Building 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W. Mail Code: 3903R Washington, DC 20460	<b>Courier Address:</b> OGD Waivers c/o Jessica Durand Ronald Reagan Building 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Rm # 51278 Washington, DC 20004
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In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Organization Name and Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS)
- Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
- Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through [Grants.gov](#).

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request -- all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding proposal content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2019, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2019). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2019 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2020, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2020.

Please note that the process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in *Section VII* of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

## **B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions**

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. DUNS number) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov), and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS number) is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS number listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then "Apply for Grants" from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit [Adobe Reader Compatibility Information](#) on Grants.gov.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Go to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OLEM-OEM-19-08**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (**CFDA 66.813**), in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

Please Note: All applications must now be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) using the "Workspace" feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the Grants.gov [Workspace Overview Page](#).

**Application Submission Deadline:** Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) **no later than June 10, 2020, 11:59 PM (ET)**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all of the application materials described below using the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) application package accessed using the instructions above.

## **Application Materials**

**The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:**

### **Mandatory Documents:**

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-award Compliance Review Report
5. Narrative Proposal (*See Section IV.D. for details on the content of the Narrative Proposal and the associated page limits*)

6. Other Attachments Form – Use for required attachments Budget and Milestones. (*See Section IV.D*)

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact **Ellen Treimel at (202) 564-0557 or [treimel.ellen@epa.gov](mailto:treimel.ellen@epa.gov)**. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

### C. Technical Issues with Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR, to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced, or a revised application needs to be submitted.
2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch, and a sign-in page will appear. **Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.** The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.

A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission.

**Note: [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.**

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to Grants.gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to **Ellen Treimel at [treimel.ellen@epa.gov](mailto:treimel.ellen@epa.gov)**, with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact **Ellen Treimel at (202) 564-0557**. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely

because they did not properly or timely register in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

- a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact **Ellen Treimel at (202) 564-0557**.
- b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, and you have already attempted to resolve the issue by contacting Grants.gov, send an email message to **Ellen Treimel at [treimel.ellen@epa.gov](mailto:treimel.ellen@epa.gov)**, prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.
- c. [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal and it is too late to reapply, promptly send an email to Ellen Treimel at [treimel.ellen@epa.gov](mailto:treimel.ellen@epa.gov), with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or via email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

#### **D. Content of Application Submission**

**The following documents are required for all application packages.** Please note that the “Narrative Proposal,” a maximum of 15 pages in length.

1. **Standard Form 424**, Application for Federal Assistance
2. **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs** (SF-424A)
3. **EPA Key Contacts** (EPA Form 5700-54)
4. **Pre-award Compliance Review Report** (EPA Form 4700-4)
5. **Narrative Proposal** (15-page limit)

Narrative Proposals must be concise, well organized, and not exceed 15 typed, single-line spaced, 8 1/2 x 11” pages. The Narrative Proposal must provide the information detailed in this section and, **include responses to all *Section III.C., Threshold Criteria, Section V.A., Evaluation Criteria***, as well as the information identified in ***Section I, Funding***

**Opportunity Description.** Factual information about your proposed project must be provided. Do not include discussions of broad principles that are not specific to the proposed work or project covered by your proposal. **Responses to evaluation criteria should include the criteria number and title but need not restate the entire text of the criteria.** Sufficient detail must be provided to allow for an evaluation of the merits of the proposal. Vague descriptions, redundancy, and failure to address the selection criteria will result in a lower ranking.

The Narrative Proposal (*Sections “a” and “b” below*) must substantially conform to the following outline and content:

- a. **Cover Letter.** The cover letter must include a brief description of your project, be written on your organization’s official letterhead, and signed by an official with the authority to commit your organization to the proposed project. The cover letter must also include:
  - i. **Applicant Information.** Provide the name and full address of the tribe or consortium applying for funds. This is the agency or organization that will be receiving the grant and will be accountable to the EPA;
  - ii. **Contacts.** Provide phone/fax numbers, e-mail address, and mailing address of the project director and head of organization/executive director responsible for the project proposal. These individuals may be contacted if other information is needed;
  - iii. **Cooperative Partners.** Provide names and phone numbers of individuals and organizations that have agreed to participate in the implementation of the project, if any; and
  - iv. **Funding Requested.** Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA. **The total funding requested amount may not exceed \$500,000, excluding any in-kind contribution or match.**
- b. **Detailed Project Description.** The project description should provide the information below on how the applicant will implement and conduct its project and discuss how the proposal addresses each of the evaluation criteria in *Section V* of this announcement.

The detailed project description must substantially conform to the following outline and content:

- i. **Project Description.** Provide a description of the proposed project, as referenced in *Section I.B, Project Description*, and program objectives. The project description should 1) outline how the proposed project will select and

conduct research on national emergency response and removal program implementation issues of wide State concern; 2) discuss how the recipient will support efforts to share information developed through this agreement; and 3) promote dialogue between Federal agencies and the States on issues of importance to the emergency response and removal program.

- ii. **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance.** Submit a list of federally and/or non-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 that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. 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/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of zero for these factors.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

- iii. **Performance Measurement: Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs.**

**Anticipated Outcomes:** Identify the expected environmental outcomes as described in *Section I.D(1)*., *Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs* of this announcement. Discuss how you propose to track and measure your progress in achieving the project outcomes and results. (*Refer to Section V.A., Evaluation Criteria, Performance Measurement.*)

**Anticipated Outputs.** Identify the expected project outputs, including those described in *Section I.D(2)*., *Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs* of this announcement and how you will track and measure your expected project outputs. Outputs, quantitative or qualitative, must be

measurable during the project performance period. (*Refer to Section V.A, Evaluation Criteria, Performance Measurement.*)

- iv. **Cost share/match and leveraged funds.** Demonstrate how you will provide the required cost share listed in Section III.B. and support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. Selected applicants are required to provide the required cost share. Failure to do so may affect the legitimacy of the award.
  - v. **Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds.** Describe your organization's procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.
3. **Required Attachments.** The following documents shall be included as attachments to the work plan. These documents will not count as part of the 15-page limit and do not have an individual page limitation. Attachments beyond the required attachments below will not be considered. Please provide a list of all attachments to the proposal.
- a. **Budget.** Provide a detailed itemized budget proposal that clearly explains how funds will be used for each of the following categories and how it relates to the project objective. Indicate what portion of the cost EPA will pay, and what portion the applicant or other partners will pay, if applicable:
    - i. Personnel;
    - ii. Fringe Benefits;
    - iii. Contractual Costs;
    - iv. Travel;
    - v. Supplies;
    - vi. Other Costs (be specific);
    - vii. Administrative Costs (other than Indirect Costs);
    - viii. Non-EPA Project Funding. Identify funding from other sources including in-kind resources;
    - ix. Total Direct Costs;
    - x. Total Indirect Costs (must include Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as documentation of federally-approved indirect cost rate (percentage); and
    - xi. Total Project Cost (Total Direct + Indirect Costs). Costs proposed in the budget must be linked directly to the narrative proposal.

**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 applicant's 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.

- b. **Milestones.** Schedule indicating start times and completion dates of significant tasks under your Program.

## E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and sub-awards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing Applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions. These provisions should be reviewed prior to application submission.

## SECTION V - APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

All applications received by the closing date and time for the submission will first be reviewed to determine eligibility for funding based upon compliance with the Threshold Eligibility Criteria in *Section III.C*. Only applications determined eligible will be evaluated for technical merit. Applications that do not meet the Threshold Eligibility Criteria will not be reviewed according to the evaluation criteria set forth below. **You must directly and explicitly address these criteria** as part of your proposal package. EPA will rate your proposal using a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

### A. Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Maximum Points per Criterion
<p><b>Technical Approach.</b> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the quality and extent to which the proposal effectively addresses the project description in <i>Section I.B.</i> of this announcement. The proposal will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the proposed project description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly and concisely provides a description of the proposed project goals, activities, budget, and project milestones that can realistically be achieved; (15 pts.)</li> <li>Is technically sound and structured to accomplish the proposal requirements; (10 pts.)</li> </ul>	35

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes measures for demonstrating success. (10 pts.)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance.</b> Under this criterion, the proposal will be evaluated based on your ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to this section. (10 points)</li> <li>b) Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project (5 points)</li> <li>c) Staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project (5 points)</li> <li>d) History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to this section including whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements, and if such progress was not being made whether you adequately reported and why not. (10 points)</li> </ul> <p><i>NOTE: In evaluating you under items “a” and “d” of this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by you and may also consider relevant information from other sources including EPA files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items a and d above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors</i></p>	30
<p><b>Performance Measurement: Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs.</b> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent to which the “Narrative Proposal” realistically describes how the project will lead to measurable environmental results (i.e., amount of pollution prevented; waste reduced, reused, recycled or, resources conserved). The Applications will be evaluated on the quality and extent to which they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly specify anticipated environmental outcomes and outputs as described in <i>Section 1.E., Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs</i>. (6 pts.)</li> <li>Clearly describe the measures of success for the project. Measures of success should be either measures of environmental improvement or should be directly linked to such measures. EPA will look for quantitative and qualitative measurability. (5 pts.)</li> </ul>	15

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how progress towards achieving project outcomes and outputs will be evaluated and measured. Include a description of any planned reports or other deliverables and milestones that measure and track the project success and, document achievement of expected outputs identified in <i>Section I.E., Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs</i>). (4 pts.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Budget/Resources.</b> This criterion refers to the proposed budget, in-kind goods and services, and other resources that the applicant outlines to carry out the proposed project. The proposal will be evaluated based on the extent to which the budget is clearly Stated, detailed, and appropriate to achieve the project's objectives. How will your proposed budget effectively sustain your proposed project? How will you plan on managing this budget? This should include cost estimates for each of the proposed project activities to be conducted using EPA funds.	10
<b>Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds.</b> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (10 pts.)	10

## B. Other Factors

Final funding decisions will be made by the EPA Headquarters Selection Official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendations of the EPA evaluation team. In making the final funding decisions, the EPA Headquarters Selection Official may also consider programmatic priorities.

## C. Review and Selection Process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated by a review panel of EPA Headquarters staff for technical merit, based on the evaluation factors detailed in *Section V.A.* of this announcement.

Upon completion of the technical merit evaluation, each proposal will be given an evaluated numerical score with a total of 100 points possible. The evaluated numerical scores will be rank ordered. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the EPA Headquarters Selection Official based on this ranking, who will make the final selection.

## D. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing Applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

## **SECTION VI – AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. Award Notices**

EPA anticipates notification of unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by August 2020. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by EPA's Grants and Interagency Agreement Management Division. Applicants are cautioned that only a Grants Officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant.

The award notice, signed by an EPA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant may take 90 days or longer.

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

1. Funding will be awarded as a cooperative agreement. Successful applicants will be asked to submit additional required forms. An EPA project officer will work with the successful applicant to finalize the budget and work plan.
2. Approved cooperative agreements will include terms and conditions that will be binding on the grant recipient. Terms and conditions specify what grantees must do to ensure that grant-related and program-related requirements are met. You may view a listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements at <https://www2.epa.gov/grants/grant-terms-and-conditions>.
3. An applicant that receives an award under this announcement is expected to manage assistance agreement funds efficiently and effectively and make sufficient progress towards completing the project activities described in the work-plan in a timely manner. The assistance agreement will include terms and conditions implementing this requirement.

### **C. Reporting Requirements**

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. The successful applicant will submit quarterly progress reports to the EPA Project Officer within thirty days after the end of each reporting period. These reports shall cover work status, work progress, difficulties encountered, preliminary data results, and planned activities for the next quarter. In addition, a discussion and summary of expenditures along with a comparison of the percentage of the project completed to the project schedule and an explanation of significant discrepancies shall be included in the report. The report shall also include any changes of key personnel involved with the project. EPA will establish a schedule of submission of quarterly reports after award.

At the close of the grant, the successful applicant will submit a final technical report to the EPA Project Officer within 90 calendar days of completion of the period of performance. The final technical report shall include a summary of the project or activity, advances or goals achieved, and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final technical report should discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational, or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere.

### **D. Use of Funds**

An applicant that receives an award under this announcement is expected to manage cooperative agreement funds efficiently and effectively and make sufficient progress towards completing the project activities described in the work plan in a timely manner. The cooperative agreement will include terms/conditions implementing this requirement. The Agency expects timely drawdown of funds and a yearly financial report. In addition to quarterly reports, other required financial reports will provide the Agency with information regarding progress being made.

### **E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation**

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing Applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in Section VII to obtain the provisions.

### **F. 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 Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-competition-dispute-resolution-procedures>).

## **SECTION VII – AGENCY CONTACTS**

### **EPA Headquarters Contact Information**

**Ellen Treimel**, U.S. EPA, Office Of Emergency Management (MC 5104-A), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460; Phone 202-564-0557 or email: [treimel.ellen@epa.gov](mailto:treimel.ellen@epa.gov).

## **SECTION VIII – OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. National Environmental Information Exchange Network**

The Environmental Information Exchange Network (Exchange Network, Network or EN) is a partner-inspired, developed, implemented and governed information network. It facilitates environmental data sharing among EPA, States, tribes and territories. The EN uses a standards-based approach that allows partners to exchange data over the Internet regardless of the specific information technology used. This replaces the need to perform complex and expensive data transformations to move data between systems or to share data on paper, discs or other media or via email. Partners share electronic data more easily and at a lower cost, and environmental decision makers are able to use the data to make timely decisions. States, tribes and territories exchanging data with each other or with EPA, should make the Exchange Network and the agency's connection to it, the Central Data Exchange (CDX), the standard way they exchange data and should phase out any legacy methods they have been using. More information available on <http://www.exchangenetwork.net/>.

### **B. Grants Resource Information**

For additional information on how to apply for, manage, and complete an EPA grant, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/how-apply-grants>