

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5

TITLE: Sustainable Materials Management Grants

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-R5-LCRD-2021

ASSISTANCE LISTING (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.808

IMPORTANT DATES:

RFA Issuance Date: April 16th, 2021

Informational Call: April 26th, 2021 1:30 P.M. Central Standard Time (CST) (see section IV)

Application Submission Deadline: June 1st, 2021, 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time (ET)

EPA notifies selected finalists: early August 2021

Expected Grant Awards: by October 1st, 2021

DATES: The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **June 1st, 2021 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time (ET)** in order to be considered for funding. Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov>) on or before this date in order to be considered for funding. See Section III (C)(2) for more details about the deadline and Section IV (B) for submission instructions.

SUMMARY: EPA Region 5 is soliciting applications that address at least one of the two Sustainable Materials Management priorities identified in Section I below. These projects benefit states in Region 5, which includes Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Minnesota.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND AWARDS: The total estimated funding range for this competitive funding opportunity is between \$100,000 to \$150,000. EPA Region 5 anticipates funding up to three to four grants and/or cooperative agreements from this announcement, ranging in value from \$30,000 to \$60,000, contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. EPA expressly reserves the right to make no awards under a particular Funding Opportunity or to adjust the number of awards originally anticipated under a specific Funding Opportunity. In 2020, approximately \$170,000 was awarded to 3 projects ranging from \$50,000 to \$60,000.

CONTENTS BY SECTION

- I. Funding Opportunity Description
- II. Award Information
- III. Eligibility Information
- IV. Application and Submission Information
- V. Application Review and Selection Process, including Criteria
- VI. Award Administration Information
- VII. Agency Contacts

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A.) Background

EPA Region 5 (R5) is soliciting applications that address the Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) priorities listed below. SMM is a systemic approach to using and reusing materials more productively over their entire lifecycles. It represents a change in how our society thinks about the use of natural resources and environmental protection. By looking at a product's entire life cycle, we can find new opportunities to reduce environmental impacts, conserve resources and reduce costs. **At least one of the two following SMM priorities must be addressed as part of this RFA:**

1.) Addressing Municipal and/or Industrial Recycling Markets in Region 5

Recycling is an important driver of the United States' economy and a way to conserve our resources and protect the environment. Recycling reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators; conserves natural resources such as timber, water, and minerals; and decreases wasted energy by reducing the need to extract and process new raw materials. In 2020 EPA recognized the importance of recycling by establishing the [National Recycling Goal](#), which aims to increase the national recycling rate by 50% by the year 2030. EPA hopes to accomplish this goal by focusing on the strategic objectives identified in the [Draft National Recycling Strategy](#) including reducing contamination in the recycling stream, increasing processing efficiency, and improving markets. However, a major impediment to achieve this goal is the fragmented nature of markets across municipalities, states, and regions, etc. Fragmented markets impede recycling and increase the cost of recycling throughout the recovered material value chain. **In order to address this challenge, R5 is soliciting projects that will encourage collaboration and coordination across R5 geographies, organizations, and/or businesses to enhance local recycling systems, making them stronger and more agile to address changing materials markets. By establishing stronger networks of recyclers, organizations, and governments, existing recycling systems and markets can be advanced in Region 5.**

Project examples under this priority include, but are not limited to:

- establishing and maintaining a collaborative network in Region 5 to foster improved approaches to the collection, marketing, and distribution of municipal and/or industrial recycling materials and provide feedstock to manufacturers in the U.S.;
- developing methods to improve market information, and/or connection between markets (e.g. different geographic locations, industries, consumers, and generators, etc.) for recovered municipal and/or industrial recyclable material;

- distributing information or establishing programs that encourage public or private partners to utilize or invest in recycled municipal and/or industrial materials, and ultimately support economic development around recycled materials markets.

2.) Strategies for Preventing Food Loss and Waste Through Source Reduction and/or Food Rescue in Region 5:

Currently 30-40% of all available food in the U.S. goes uneaten. When wholesome, edible food ends up in a landfill, embedded natural resources along with money, time, and labor spent to get them from farm to plate, are also wasted. This impacts the environment, our communities, and the economy. Led by EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the federal government is working with communities, organizations, and businesses along with our partners in state, tribal, and local government to reduce food loss and waste by 50 percent over the next 10 years as identified in [EPA's 2030 Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal](#). [EPA's Food Waste Hierarchy](#) identifies "Source Reduction" and "Feeding Hungry People" as the most effective strategies for addressing food loss and waste. **In order to address these challenges, EPA is requesting applications for projects that use the top two strategies, of the Food Waste Hierarchy (Source Reduction and Feeding Hungry People) either individually or in a combination, to prevent food loss and waste. Projects submitted under this RFA will work with a network of stakeholders to achieve this goal and demonstrate progress to reaching EPA's 2030 Food Loss and Waste Reduction goal.**

Project examples under this priority include, but are not limited to:

- establishing and maintaining a collaborative network in Region 5 to foster improved approaches to focusing on source reduction and food rescue strategies;
- increasing public awareness of the environmental, social, and economic benefits of reducing wasted food via source reduction and distribution to people, particularly in underserved and under-resourced communities;
- improving data quality, including establishing baseline food waste metrics, assessing progress on current food waste intervention activities, or measuring the potential for increased food rescue efforts;
- encouraging the development of policies and practices which effectively divert excess food to new markets and/or expands food rescue capacity.

B.) Scope of Work

As noted above in Section I.A, this RFA solicits applications that support the priorities of addressing municipal and/or industrial recycling markets, or strategies for preventing food loss and waste through source reduction and/or food rescue in R5. Applications addressing other topic areas will not be reviewed.

C.) Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs & Performance Measures

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," (see <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>) EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 1: A Cleaner,

Healthier Environment; Objective 1.1 Improve Air Quality, Objective 1.2 Provide for Clean and Safe Water, Objective 1.3 Revitalize Land and Prevent Contamination, and Objective 1.4 Ensure Safety of Chemical in the Marketplace; Goal 2: More Effective Partnerships, Objective 2.1 Enhance Shared Accountability, Objective 2.2 Increase Transparency and Public Participation; and Goal 3: Greater Certainty, Compliance and Effectiveness, Objective 3.1 Compliance with the Law, Objective 3.2 Create Consistency and Certainty, 3.3 Prioritize Robust Science, 3.4 Streamline and Modernize, and 3.5 Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness.

EPA's Strategic Plan is available at <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>

All applications must demonstrate these connections to the current Strategic Plan. Applicants must show how their project will further these current priorities.

EPA also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements). Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the priorities described above.

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. Examples of expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement may include the following, but are not limited to: meetings, conference calls, training sessions, or other measurable efforts towards an environmental goal. Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI (C) of this announcement, “Reporting Requirements.”

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 outcome measures for project(s) to be funded under this announcement include the following, but are not limited to: reduction in solid waste going to the landfill, conservation of natural resources, conservation of energy, improved air and/or water quality, preserved land quality, dollars saved through recycling or reuse efforts, jobs created or retained.

Performance Measures. The applicant must also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in the application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful process and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients.

The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- i) What are some measurable short term and long term results the project hopes to achieve?
- ii) How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

D.) Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for this action is the Solid Waste Disposal Act (SWDA), Section 8001(a)(5), 42 U.S.C. Section 6981 (a)(5) which authorizes grants and cooperative agreements for research, investigation, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, public education programs and studies relating to the reduction of the amount of solid waste and unsalvageable waste materials. This is done under CFDA 66.808.

Applications selected for funding under this solicitation must be consistent with the authorized activities above. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. **You must specify how your project fits within the above statutory authority.**

E.) Sub awardees and/or Contractors

If you name sub awardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s), including individual consultants, in your application as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section III regarding "Coalitions" and to the "Contracts and Subawards" provisions at: <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses> (incorporated by reference in Section IV).

F.) Minority Serving Institutions

EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces. At the same time, EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation by including members of communities which may have not previously participated in such dialogues to participate in EPA programs. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including minority serving institutions (MSIs), to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered MSIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061). A list of these schools can be found at [Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)

2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at [American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities](#)

3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at [Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#)

4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(a)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions](#); and

5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at [Predominately Black Institutions](#)

G.) Human Subjects Studies

Questions about Human Subjects Studies should be directed to the Human Subjects Research Review Official at <http://www2.epa.gov/osa/forms/contact-us-about-programs-office-science-advisor>.

II. Award Information

A.) Available Funding

The total estimated funding range expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is between \$100,000 to \$150,000. EPA anticipates awarding three cooperative agreements under this announcement ranging in value from \$30,000 to \$60,000. The number of projects EPA will fund as a result of this announcement will be based on the quality of applications received, the availability of funding, and other applicable considerations. The anticipated total number and total amount of awards to be provided are estimates only and are being provided solely for application preparation purposes.

B.) Funding Type

EPA intends to award cooperative agreements under this solicitation. Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant(s) 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 these projects may include:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient). EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

C.) Additional Funding

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

D.) 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.

E.) Start Date and Length of Project Period

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this announcement will begin October 1st, 2021, although project start dates can be negotiated. Projects are normally funded for one year. If necessary, project periods can be extended.

III. Eligibility Information

A.) Eligible Applicants

Consistent with the Applicant Eligibility Section of CFDA No. 66.808, applications will be accepted from State (including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands), local, Tribal, interstate, and intrastate government agencies and instrumentalities, and non-profit organizations that are not 501(c)(4) organizations that lobby, including non-profit educational institutions and non-profit hospitals.

Non-profit organization, as defined by 2 CFR Part 200.70, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve and/or expand its operations. Note that 2 CFR 200.70 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a non-profit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR 200.70, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR 200.70 are also eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible.

Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible for funding under this opportunity. Additionally, 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. Eligible non-profit organizations must have documentation of non-profit status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service or their state of incorporation.

Partnerships: Groups of two or more applicants may choose to form a partnership and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one eligible applicant must be responsible for the grant. Partnerships must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which organization(s) will be sub awardees of the recipient. Subawards and subgrants must be consistent with the definitions of those terms in 2 C.F.R. 200.92. The recipient must administer the grant, will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 C.F.R. 200.331(d), subrecipients or subgrantees are accountable to the recipient or grantee for proper use of EPA funding. Please review the [EPA Subaward Policy](#) for subaward requirements, guidance, and training.

B.) Partially Ineligible Activities

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

C.) Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the applicant by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications for eligible activities from eligible entities (see above definitions of **applicant eligibility**, **eligible activities**, and **ineligible activities**) that meet these criteria by the time of application submission will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this RFA. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified by e-mail within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

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

2. Initial applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](#) as stated in Section IV of this announcement on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application 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 application 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. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Susan Vescovi at 312-353-2478 or by email at vescovi.susan@epa.gov as soon as possible before the submission deadline, failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

3. The applicant must be an eligible entity as described in Section III.A above.

4. Applications must address current administration priorities as described in Section I.C of this solicitation.

5. All applications must address and promote the Sustainable Materials Management program priorities described in Section I.A that is, either addressing municipal recycling and/or industrial recycling markets or strategies for reducing food loss and waste through source reduction and/or food rescue.

6. All applications submitted under this solicitation must conduct or promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, public education programs and studies relating to the reduction of the amount of solid waste and unsalvageable waste materials as described in Section I of this announcement and according to the statutory authority under the Solid Waste Disposal Act (SWDA), Section 8001(a)(5), 42 U.S.C. Section 6981 (a)(5).

7. Applications must be for projects that benefit the EPA Region 5 States.

D.) Cost Sharing or Matching

This competition does not require matching funds or cost sharing.

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](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov), the applicant must contact 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.

Mailing Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.

Rm # 51278
Washington, DC 20004

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](https://www.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 application 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, 2018, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2018). 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 for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2020 with a submission deadline of February 15, 2021, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2021. 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, 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](https://www.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, 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-R5-LCRD-2021, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.808), 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 1st, 2021 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 application package accessed using the instructions above.

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. 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 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](https://www.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 Susan Vescovi with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact vescovi.susan@epa.gov at 312-353-2847. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> 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 or 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://www.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 Susan Vescovi at 312-353-2478.

b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from 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 vescovi.susan@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 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 vescovi.susan@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.) Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. EPA implemented the Executive Order in 40 CFR Part 29. EPA may require applicants selected for funding to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review as provided at 40 CFR 29.7 and 40 CFR 29.8. The SPOC list can be found on the webpage below.

- [Office of Federal Financial Management Resources and Other Information](#)

EPA may require successful applicants from states that do not have a SPOC to provide a copy of their application for review to directly affected state, area-wide, regional and local government entities as provided at 40 CFR 29.7 and 40 CFR 29.8. These reviews are not required before submitting an application. Only applicants that EPA selects for funding under this announcement are subject to the Intergovernmental Review requirement.

E.) Content of Application Package Submission

All application submissions must contain completed grant application forms, as well as a Narrative Work Plan as described below.

Grant Application Forms: Please be sure to include the organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. The forms are available at www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grantee-forms.

- a. Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*
- b. Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information*
- c. EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants Requesting Federal Financial Assistance*
- d. EPA Form 5700-54, *Key Contacts Form, including Authorized Official Representative and Project Manager contact information of the two individuals.*
- e. Project Narrative Attachment Form – Used to submit the Narrative Work Plan (as described below)

Narrative Work Plan: The Narrative Work Plan (sections 1-3 below) must not exceed a maximum of 11 single-spaced typewritten pages, including the cover page, with a minimum font size of 11.5. Supporting materials such as resumes and letters of support can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 11-page limit. The work plan must address all the relevant threshold criteria in Section III and the evaluation criteria in Section V.

1. Summary Information Page (recommended to not exceed one page):

- a. Project title

- b. Applicant information: include applicant (organization) name, address, project manager, phone number, fax, and email address
- c. Funding requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA
- d. Total project cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources including cost share or in-kind resources. Refer to <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02> for a sample budget and guidance.
- e. Project period. Provide beginning and ending dates.
- f. DUNS number

2. Work Plan

The work plan must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-III of this announcement (including the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III (C)) and must address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.

Workplan Elements Include:

(1) Project Summary and Responsiveness to the Priority

Provide a summary of your project identifying the priority addressed (see the two priorities referred to in Section I (A)) and outlining the objectives and your strategy for achieving those objectives. This section should cover what you will do, why you will do it, how you will do it, and an estimate of how long it will take to complete each task.

(2) Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs and Performance Measures

- a. Identify and estimate anticipated quantitative outcomes (See Section V of this solicitation for examples of outcome measures). Please specify a timetable for reporting quantifiable outcomes and describe how they will be measured. If certain outcomes will be measured after the overall project is completed, a grant may be extended to allow for reporting those outcomes. Project outcomes must be addressed in the final report submitted prior to closeout of grant.
- b. Identify and estimate quantitative and qualitative outputs. Explain how and when the outputs will be measured and tracked.
- c. Identify appropriate performance measures for the project as well as short and long-term objectives for the project.

(3) Capability Documentation

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

(4) Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Submit a list of federal 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 5 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 reporting information, please indicate this in the application 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 0 for these factors.

(5) Collaboration, Outreach, and Transferability

Identify key partners involved with the project and explain the collaborative nature of the project. Explain how the results of the project will be effectively communicated to interested stakeholders within R5. Explain how the proposed project will be useful to others in R5 and those outside of the Region.

(6) Sustainability

Provide a clear and detailed description of the extent to which the project supports and/or aligns with a state and/or local mandate, policy, and/or community priority to improve community health, resilience and/or sustainability.

(7) Schedule with Milestones

Identify project milestones and project schedule. Identify key tasks and subtasks, indicating what will be done, by whom, and when. The timeline must be closely linked to the proposed scope of work. Output and outcome reporting must be addressed in the timeline.

(8) Detailed Budget Narrative

Provide a clear description of the budget for the project. Describe how federal and matching funding (if any) will be spent. Provide a breakout of the approximate funding for each major activity over a reasonable and detailed timeline. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Refer to <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02> for a sample budget and guidance.

3. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Submission

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 application 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.

V. Application Review and Selection Process, including Criteria

Only eligible entities whose application(s) meet the threshold eligibility requirements in Section III.C of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion set forth below. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal. The applications will be reviewed using the evaluation criteria listed below on a **100 point** scale of assigned points.

Evaluation Criteria	Points
<p>1. Responsiveness to Priority: The application will be evaluated based on the extent to which the proposed project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. uses well-conceived, creative, and effective strategies to address one of the priorities described in Section I.A.1 (Background and Priorities) and Section I.C (EPA Strategic Plan Linkage) (15 points), b. articulates a reasonable time schedule for executing the tasks associated with the project goals and that these goals are realistic, reasonable, and will be implemented by the project’s end (10 points) and, c. has the capacity to institute real change in the framework of the SMM priority or priorities addressed (5 points). 	30 points
<p>2. Environmental Results – Outcomes, Outputs, and Performance Measures: The application will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the application addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. clear measure(s) of success for the project, including short and long-term objectives (5 points), b. anticipated outcomes for the project (outcomes may include, but are not limited to, energy, environmental, economic, and climate change-related outcomes should be identified) and anticipated outputs for the project (5 points) and, c. an effective plan or methodology for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the anticipated outcomes (e.g., pounds/tons of waste prevented, pounds/tons material recycled/reused/composted instead of disposed, tons of greenhouse gases reduced (calculated via the Waste Reduction model https://www.epa.gov/warm) due to waste prevention and diversion, dollars saved through waste prevention, or revenue generated through 	15 points

<p>material sales, etc.) and outputs (e.g., number stakeholders involved in the process, increase in knowledge and understanding of sources of waste and/or barriers to waste prevention, number of workshops, web site hits, number of training sessions, etc.) See Section I for more information on outcomes and outputs. In addition, the Agency will evaluate the performance measures proposed by the applicant and how they will be used to help track and measure the Applicant’s progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (5 points).</p>	
<p>3. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: The applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the narrative portion of the application as described in Section IV.G.4 of the announcement (5 points), b. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the narrative portion of the application as described in Section IV.G.4 of the announcement including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not (5 points), and c. organizational experience, staff expertise, qualifications, knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project (5 points). <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items a and b of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these sub-factors. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p>	<p>15 points</p>

<p>5. Communication, Collaboration, and Transferability: The applicant will be evaluated based on the extent their project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. involves valuable collaboration and partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders (10 points), b. provides an effective communication plan for sharing the results of the project (5 points) and, c. describes how the deliverables or outcomes of the project will be transferable and useful to other stakeholders in Region 5 and beyond (5 points). 	<p>20 points</p>
<p>6. Sustainability: The applicant will be evaluated based on the extent to which the project supports and/or aligns with a state and/or local mandate, policy, and/or community priority to improve community health, resilience and/or sustainability (5 points).</p>	<p>5 points</p>
<p>6. Budget and Timeline: The applicant will be evaluated based on the extent the application (refer to https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02 for a sample budget and guidance):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. provides a reasonable and detailed budget to support the scope of work, including the measurement aspects of the effort (5 points) and, b. provides a breakout of the approximate funding for each major activity over a reasonable and detailed timeline (5 points). 	<p>10 points</p>
<p>7. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: 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.</p>	<p>5 points</p>

B.) Review and Selection Process.

All applications received by EPA by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff using the threshold eligibility requirements criteria in Section III of the announcement. Applications that do not pass the threshold eligibility review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible applications using the evaluation criteria listed in Section V and assign numerical scores to each application.

The panel will develop a list of the highest scored applications to submit to the Selection Official in Region 5 for final funding decisions. Final funding decisions will then be made by the Selection Official based on the evaluation conducted by the review panel and may also consider factors such as:

1. Geographic distribution of projects;
2. Programmatic priorities; and
3. Availability of funds

C.) Communications

EPA R5 will host an informational call to discuss this RFA and respond to questions. Because all questions may not be asked and answered during the scheduled time for the call, questions should be submitted in advance to Susan Vescovi (vescovi.susan@epa.gov). Questions and answers will be recorded and distributed to interested applicants via the program website. Additional questions will be answered following this phone call. The questions and answers will be posted weekly each Friday during the competition at the R5 SMM grant competition website. If you would like to submit a question, please contact Susan Vescovi via phone at 312-353-2478 or email vescovi.susan@epa.gov.

Phone Call Schedule:

Date: April 26th, 2021 at 1:30 pm Central Standard Time/ 2:30pm Eastern Time

Topic: Land, Chemicals, and Redevelopment Division, Sustainable Materials Management Request for Applications

Phone Number: 312-667-5632, Conference Code: 242 403 275#

D.) Additional Provisions

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 <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals 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.

VI. Award Administration Information

A.) Award Notices

Following EPA's evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status

Applicant Notifications

EPA anticipates notification to *successful* applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by early August 2021. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its project 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 the regional Grants Management Office.

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 can take up to 90 days or longer

EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicant(s) will be made via telephone or electronic mail within 15 days after successful applicants are notified. Notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B.) Administrative and National Policy requirements.

A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/policy-regulations-and-guidance-epa-grants>.

Reporting Requirements

Electronically submitted quarterly progress reports and a detailed final technical report will be required. Quarterly reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for the next quarter and a summary of expenditures are required. The final technical report shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final technical report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances 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. The schedule for submission of quarterly reports will be established by EPA, after award.

C.) 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. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement. Please note that the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding this, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E. More information about Disputes can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

D.) Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)

Quality Assurance /Quality Control requirements are applicable to these grants (see 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements,

produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Regional Office Grant Coordinator (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff).

E.) Combining Applications Into One Award:

If an applicant submits applications for multiple tasks/ activities under this competition, and is selected for multiple tasks/activities, EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines separate applications for different tasks/activities

F.) 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 <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.

VII. Agency Contacts

Questions regarding this notice can be directed to:

Susan Vescovi
US EPA Region 5 (Mail Code: LM-17J)
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: 312-353-2478
Email: Vescovi.Susan@epa.gov