

OVERVIEW

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

TITLE: Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2021 Request for Applications for Strategic Communication and Media Support

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications (RFAs)

RFA NUMBER: EPA-R3-CBP-21-06

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.466

IMPORTANT DATES

June 14, 2021	Issuance of RFA
August 02, 2021	Application Submission Deadline (see Section IV for more information)
August 23, 2021	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
September 06, 2021	Approximate date for applicant to submit revised federal cooperative agreement application
October 06, 2021	Approximate date of award

EPA will consider all eligible applications that are submitted via Grants.gov on or before 11:59 pm EST on **August 02, 2021**. EPA will only accept applications submitted via Grants.gov, except in the limited circumstances where applicants have no or very limited Internet access (see section IV.).

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](#).

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) is announcing a Request for Applications (RFA) for applicants to provide the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partners with support related to strategic communication, media relations, and communication product development and distribution for the Chesapeake Bay Program. This RFA sets forth the process that will be used for competitively selecting recipients that will provide strategic communication planning and implementation, including production and distribution of print, Web, and multimedia products intended to meet the prescribed environmental results in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. CBP partners include federal agencies, seven watershed jurisdictions, and many non-federal organizations; however, work funded under this RFA will support the seven watershed jurisdictions and other non-federal partners. The

seven watershed jurisdictions are Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

FUNDING/AWARDS: This RFA will cover the project period up to and including six years from an expected start date of October 06, 2021. CBPO plans to award one cooperative agreement to carry out all activities under this RFA. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$3,000,000 to 3,300,000 (of which \$225,600 includes in-kind), with an estimated \$500,000 to \$550,000 (of which \$37,600 includes in-kind) available each year. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

To support this project, the selected applicant will provide staff who, for matters of efficiency, will be located at the U.S. EPA CBPO located in Annapolis, Maryland. Office space will be provided by EPA as in-kind assistance of \$9400/person/year under the cooperative agreement.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

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I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

1. About the Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, CBP is responsible for supporting the Chesapeake Executive Council through a number of actions, including the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

CBP is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The CBP partners include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; EPA, representing the federal government; and participating citizen, local government, and scientific and technical advisory groups.

The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the Chesapeake Executive Council (Executive Council), which, through its leadership, establishes the policy direction for the restoration and

protection of the Chesapeake Bay and exerts its leadership to rally public support for the Bay effort and signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay restoration.

The Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) acts as the senior policy advisors to the Executive Council, accepting items for their consideration and approval and setting agendas for Executive Council meetings. The PSC also provides policy and program direction to the Management Board.

The Management Board provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the CBP. It directs and coordinates all of the goal teams and workgroups under it.

The Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Thus, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and others become active members of the broad restoration partnership.

Pursuant to Section 117(b)(2) of the Clean Water Act, 33 USC 1267 (b)(2), CBPO is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the Council in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. CBPO and CBP mentioned above are two distinct entities.

2. 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

On June 16, 2014, the Chesapeake Executive Council, CBP's governing body signed a new voluntary Chesapeake Bay agreement (referred to as *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* throughout this RFA) that will guide the CBP partnership's work into the future. For the first time, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia signed the agreement as full CBP partners in the overall effort. This agreement is one of the most comprehensive restoration plans developed for the Chesapeake region, providing greater transparency and accountability of all CBP partners. With 10 interrelated goals and 31 outcomes, this watershed-wide accord advances the restoration, conservation, and protection of all the lands and waters within the 64,000-square-mile watershed by promoting sound land use, environmental literacy, stewardship, and a diversity of engaged citizens. Additionally, the goals and outcomes aim to better protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay's living resources, water quality, and vital habitats. The new *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* also recognizes the unique and vital role local governments play and how they are essential to the restoration effort.

This cooperative agreement will help fulfill the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* commitments as described by all 10 goals and their associated outcomes.

B. Scope of Work

This RFA is seeking cost-effective applications from eligible applicants for developing and implementing a Strategic Communication Plan in support of the communication needs and priorities of the CBP partnership to support implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. This work will include developing an annual Strategic Communication Plan, planning implementation through effective and proactive media engagement, as well as

producing effective communication products for the Web, social media, and public presentations relevant to targeted audiences. Products should include, but are not necessarily limited to, news posts, fact sheets, backgrounders, digital imagery, graphics, presentations and additional relevant Web content, as well as industry standard multimedia production and content suitable for existing and emerging social media platforms. While the CBP partnership is comprised of federal and non-federal organizations, any activities funded under this RFA will not directly benefit the federal partners. The non-federal partners of the CBP partnership will provide programmatic direction to the cooperative agreement recipient through the CBP Management Board.

The successful applicant will staff the Communication Office for the Chesapeake Bay Program and coordinate the Communication Workgroup described under Activity 1. The Communication Office's activities are conducted within the framework of the Bay Program's goal to increase the number and diversity of local citizen stewards and local governments that actively support and carry out the conservation and restoration activities that achieve healthy local streams and rivers and a vibrant Chesapeake Bay and watershed through press events, websites, publications, presentations, etc.

CBPO plans to award one cooperative agreement to carry out all activities under this RFA. The estimated funding for six years is approximately \$3,000,000 to \$3,300,000 (of which \$225,600 includes in-kind), with an estimated \$500,000 to \$550,000 (of which \$37,600 includes in-kind), available each year.

If your organization has an interest in this project, has the skills to accomplish all three activities, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit an application. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activities are multi-year projects (up to six years), and the application should have a work plan and budget for the first year and a projected work plan and estimated budget detail for each of the subsequent five years. Applicants must address all three of the following activities in their application to be considered eligible.

Activity 1: Expert development and implementation of Strategic Communication Plan in support of the communication needs and priorities of the CBP partnership.

The communication needs and priorities of the partnership are influenced from year to year by shifting environmental factors, extreme weather events, and national and jurisdictional changes in political leadership. As such, the Communication Office, in consultation with the Communications Workgroup, needs to properly assess these dynamics to annually develop a Strategic Communication Plan that supports the long-term goals of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, sets the general course of communication activities for the coming year, and retains the flexibility to adapt to emerging requirements.

The following are examples of the types of tasks required to carry out Activity 1. Applicants are encouraged to describe how they would support efforts to progressively enhance the Strategic Communication Plan development and implementation.

Develop Annual Strategic Communication Plan

- Recommend communication strategy for the CBP partnership through development of a Strategic Communication Plan intended to support the needs and priorities of the CBP partnership as identified through the Strategy Review System and implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Adjust the Strategic Communication Plan based on feedback from the CBP Executive Council, Principals' Staff Committee, and Management Board, with updates at least every six months.
- Identify themes and messages for the strategic plan that focus on the CBP priorities and target audiences.
- Develop a timeline for implementation and methods to track its effectiveness.

Staff the Chesapeake Bay Program Communication Workgroup

- Coordinate and schedule monthly meetings of the Communication Workgroup.
- Solicit participation in the Workgroup with communication staff representatives from each of the Bay jurisdictions and federal agency partners and other partners. Actively seek to include participants from under-represented stakeholder groups.
- Develop meeting agendas based on current communication needs and priorities of the partnership.

Execute proactive media relations activities

- Proactively distribute CBP partnership and Bay-related news items to interested media, including targeted local outreach as appropriate.
- Manage and respond to media inquiries and interview requests.
- Establish and expand working relationship with national, regional, local, and trade media outlets. Where possible, this should include developing relationships with media outlets that reach under-represented and under-served communities through the Bay program partnership.

Provide communication training to CBP staff and partners

- Conduct annual training on topics such as successful media engagement, standard interview practices and tips, effective use of CBP communication platforms, how to develop communications strategies that incorporate principles of behavior change or cultural awareness, and tips for effective writing, speeches, and presentations.

Activity 2: Expert creative development, distribution, and management of print, multimedia, and online products to support the stated objectives of the Strategic Communication Plan.

In order to support the objectives of the Strategic Communication Plan, the Communication Office would create products for distribution to key audiences identified by the Strategic Communication Plan. These products should be developed to support the goals and priorities of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and tailored to the medium best suited to reach the intended audience.

The following are examples of the types of tasks required to carry out Activity 2. Applicants are encouraged to describe how they would support these activities and tasks.

Produce and manage targeted communication products for CBP websites

- Act as lead for writing and editing new content for the Chesapeake Bay Program's flagship website, chesapeakebay.net, and all social media, assist as necessary the web team's content manager for all other CBP partnership existing and future websites to meet the communication needs of the CBP partnership in implementing the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Develop and edit content that will include, but not be limited to, news posts, fact sheets, backgrounders, digital imagery, and graphics.
- Maintain archive of CBP partnership Web content.

Produce industry-standard multimedia products for distribution

- Produce and market multimedia video products in accordance with established CBP standard operating procedures (SOPs) for use on CBP partnership websites, additional Web-based video distribution platforms, and social media.
- Capture digital still imagery in accordance with established CBP SOPs for use on all CBP partnership websites, for use as stand-alone images, photo essays, or in support of news posts content or presentations, as well as Web-based imagery distribution platforms and social media.
- Maintain digital archive of historical CBP videos and still imagery.

Support CBP partnership internal information communication efforts

Distribute via email the following communication products to individuals who subscribe to each through www.chesapeakebay.net:

- Daily news clips of stories pertinent to the Chesapeake Bay.
- Weekly newsletter for Chesapeake Bay professionals, including restoration-related reports and Bay-related opportunities.
- Monthly summary of most pertinent communication products.

Activity 3: Expanded outreach through social media, public forums, and conferences to support the stated objectives of the Strategic Communication Plan and to raise awareness of the activities of the Chesapeake Bay Program as a national and international leader in multi-agency, multi-organizational ecosystem restoration efforts. This outreach seeks to engage and involve under-represented and under-served communities and ensures an equitable distribution of information and materials that reach beyond the traditional outlets for Chesapeake Bay Program restoration information.

For agencies and organizations undertaking similar restoration efforts, the Chesapeake Bay Program is seen as a trailblazer, often the first organization to tackle the unique challenges of inter-jurisdictional projects. At the same time, within the general public, only a small fraction of the more than 18 million residents of the Chesapeake Bay watershed are aware of the issues impacting the ecosystem or that there is a concerted effort toward restoration. It is the responsibility of the Communication Office to use social media, public forums, conferences and emergent communication platforms to inform the public of the CBP's work and its mission to improve the water quality and living resources of Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

The following are examples of the types of tasks required to carry out Activity 3. Applicants are encouraged to describe how they would support these activities and tasks.

Produce and distribute content through existing and emerging social media platforms

- Produce and distribute content using existing and emergent social media platforms to reach target audiences, both as stand-alone messaging platforms and to promote CBP Web and multimedia content.
- Undertake efforts to expand CBP audiences to include non-traditional partners and diverse communities in the watershed.

Produce presentations and products for use by CBP leadership and partners

- In coordination with subject matter experts, and incorporating established themes and messages,
 - Produce presentations for use in CBP partnership meetings and public forums to raise awareness of the CBP partnership’s goals and priorities, and
 - Produce an annual summary of partnership work and progress.

Coordinate and host CBP partnership public meetings and press events, and coordinate participation in conferences

- Organize and execute public Chesapeake Executive Council meetings and other public forums as needed.
- Proactively pitch and host media events as appropriate to advance the CBP partnership goals and priorities in supporting implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Coordinate CBP participation in national, regional, and local conferences as appropriate. This includes development of appropriate presentations, materials, and displays commensurate with the theme and scope of the conference.

Note: In addition to the examples of tasks listed for the three activities above, applicants may propose additional tasks that they believe are important to accomplishing the activities.

Obtaining Additional Information

For additional background information on the CBP achievements and commitments, see the CBP Partnership’s website located at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/>

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,” EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency’s Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, accessible at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>).

1. Linkage to EPA’s Strategic Plan

The overall objective of this cooperative agreement is to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem through continued technical support to address water-quality restoration goals and maintain public awareness of Chesapeake Bay restoration. The activity to be funded under this announcement supports [EPA’s FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan](#). The award made under this announcement will support *Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment; Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water* of the EPA Strategic Plan. All applications must be for projects that support the goals and objectives identified above.

[EPA Order 5700.7A1](#) also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved 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.

2. 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. Expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement may include the following:

- Coordinate the CBP partnership’s strategic communication objectives,
- Develop strategic communication plans,
- Develop and issue press releases,
- Hold press events,
- Staff the Communication Workgroup,
- Develop in draft and final – fact sheets, backgrounders, website content, social media content, digital imagery, and multimedia products as directed by the CBP.

Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs, as specified in Section VI(C) of this announcement, “Reporting Requirement.”

3. 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 qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. An example of an outcome under this application is increased public awareness and commitment that would result in improving aquatic health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Another potential outcome is increased number and diversity of trained and mobilized citizen volunteers with the knowledge and skills needed to enhance the health of their local watersheds.

D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

This grant is made pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 117(d), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d), which authorizes EPA to issue grants and cooperative agreements for the purposes of protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. This project is subject to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 1500).

E. 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 at: <https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/one-hundred-and-five-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 at <https://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/tribes-tcus/tribal-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 at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idades/hsi-eligibles-2016.pdf>;
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 at <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1XVkOWKMDORm53pvU0L8EPsrJC94&msa=0&ie=UTF8&t=m&z=3&source=embed&ll=40.58644586187277%2C-148.28228249999984>; 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 at https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1wlli3j7gtlNq_w-0NKAb2bF2VmY&ie=UTF8&msa=0&ll=37.35160769312532%2C-96.17229800000001&z=4

II: AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

CBPO plans to award one cooperative agreement under this RFA. Funding for the activities listed in Section I above is approximately \$500,000 to \$550,000 (of which \$37,600 includes in-kind) annually for FY2021 through FY2027, depending on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$3,000,000 to \$3,300,000 (of which \$225,600 includes in-kind). There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

To support this project, the selected applicant will provide staff who, for matters of efficiency, will be located at the U.S. EPA CBPO located in Annapolis, Maryland. Office space will be provided by EPA as in-kind assistance under the cooperative agreement.

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award under this announcement or award less than the estimated funding amounts cited. Funding for the activities depends on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year(s), as funds may be limited based on these applicable considerations.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selection is made. Any additional selection for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decision.

B. Award Type

The successful applicant will be issued cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of “substantial involvement” as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient’s performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. 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.

For this project, federal involvement would typically be in the form of participation with other CBP partners and stakeholders in an advisory capacity to the grantee. This participation is expected to include involvement through the CBP Communication Workgroup (on which EPA also participates). All work conducted is to support the efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

C. 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 a project, it will

do so in a manner that does not prejudice the applicant 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.

D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is six years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFA is **October 06, 2021**.

E. Pre-Award Costs

The recipient may incur otherwise eligible and allowable pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award at their own risk without prior approval of EPA's award official. Pre-award costs must comply with 2 C.F.R. 200.458 and 2 C.F.R. 1500.8. If EPA determines that the requested pre-award costs comply with the relevant authorities, and that the costs are justified as allocable to the project, then these costs may be included as allowable expenditures at the time that the assistance award document is prepared.

However, if for any reason EPA does not fund the proposal or the amount of the award is less than the applicant anticipated, then EPA is under no obligation to reimburse the applicant for these costs incurred. Thus, the applicant incurs pre-award costs at their own risk. Costs incurred more than 90 days prior to award require the approval of EPA Region 3's grant official.

III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, federally recognized tribes, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies are eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA. For-profit organizations are not eligible to submit applications in response to this RFA.

B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

Pursuant to Clean Water Act 117(d)(2)(A), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d)(2)(A), the agency shall determine the cost-share requirements for awards. The Assistance Listing Number for this program, 66.466, states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost-share ranging from 5 percent to 50 percent of eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For this RFA, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of five percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

Cost-share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Involvement from foundations, watershed groups, private sector, eligible governmental, as well as non-conventional partners can help with the match. This match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to the match provisions in grant regulations. Applications that do not demonstrate how the five percent match will be met will be rejected.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Only applications from eligible entities (see Section III.A above) that meet the following threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the criteria in Section V.B. Applicants must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified in writing 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. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the project narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
2. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) 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](https://www.Grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.SAM.gov) system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.SAM.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov (see Section VII, Agency Contact) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application(s) not being reviewed.

3. Applications must be for projects linked to the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.
4. For an application to be considered eligible for funding, project-related work included in the application must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia.
5. Applications must show how they will meet the five percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B.
6. Applications requesting funding for more than the maximum of the cumulative funding range for the RFA will be rejected.

7. 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 entire application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.
8. Applicants must address all three of the activities described in Section I.B. of the RFA to be considered eligible.

IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain an Application Package

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from the application package associated with this opportunity on Grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Each application will be evaluated using the criteria referenced in Section V.B. of this RFA. You must submit all the documents listed below including a single-spaced project narrative of up to 17 pages in length by the date and time specified in Section IV.C below-excess pages will not be reviewed. The format for the project narrative is contained in Appendix A of this RFA.

The application package **must** include all of the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.
2. **SF-424A, Budget Information** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
3. **EPA Form 4700-4, Pre award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance**
4. **EPA Key Contacts Form**
5. **Project Narrative Attachment Form** – The format for the project narrative including the budget detail are contained in Appendix A of this RFA.

Requirements for Project Narrative — See Appendix A

All review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the project narrative. The narrative shall not exceed 17 pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10 and the narrative must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper. Note that the 17 pages include all supporting materials, including resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support and the budget detail. The 17-page limit does not include documentation of non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, the SF-424, SF-424A, , Key Contacts Form and 4700-4 form. If you submit more than 17 pages for the project narrative, the additional pages will be discarded and will not be reviewed. See Appendix A for additional instructions.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Please review the Intergovernmental Review clause included as part of the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). This program is eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372, An Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. See this link for information and instructions: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-region-3-grants-and-audit-management-branch-intergovernmental-review-process-and-single>. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your application is selected for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority

Grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirements for “Administrative Costs” under the Section 117 (d)(4) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award (annual grant award = federal share plus cost-share). **Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet** is provided as an example of a method to calculate the 10-percent limitation. You are not required to submit Appendix B with your application.

Allowable Costs

EPA assistance agreement funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Federal funds may not be used for cost sharing for other federal grants (except where authorized by statute), lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles. During the grant negotiation, any ineligible costs outlined in the application (i.e. lobbying activities) will be excluded in the final grant award.

E. Submission Instructions

1. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this funding opportunity based on the [Grants.gov](#) instructions in this announcement. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined here. Please note that your request must be

received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with submissions with respect to this opportunity only are addressed in section 3. Technical Issues with Submission below.

2. 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](https://www.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 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](https://www.grants.gov), [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov), and DUNS number assignment is FREE. Please see RAIN-2021-G01 for information about EPA's implementation of the upcoming Government-wide transition from DUNS to Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose DUNS is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS 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 and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3-CBP-21-06, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.466), 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](https://www.grants.gov/workspace/overview).

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **August 02, 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](https://www.grants.gov) application package accessed using the instructions above.

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 James Hargett, at hargett.james@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

The application package **must** include all of the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.
2. **SF-424A, Budget Information** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
3. **EPA Form 4700-4, Pre award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance**
4. **EPA Key Contacts Form**
5. **Project Narrative Attachment Form** – The format for the project narrative including the budget detail are contained in Appendix A to the RFA.

3. Technical Issues with Submission

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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 James Hargett with the FON in the subject line. 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.

If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), it is essential to call 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.

d. 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 hargett.james@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.

e. 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 James Hargett 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.

V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews applications for threshold eligibility purposes as described in Section III, CBPO will conduct a merit evaluation of each eligible application per the criteria below. Reviews will be performed by a team of professionals from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of CBP partnership. All reviewers will sign a conflict of interest statement indicating they have no conflict of interest.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

The evaluation criteria below apply to the review of applications under this RFA.

Criteria	Points
<p>1. Organizational Capability, Scope, and Approach: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The quality of the application and how well it demonstrates the ability to timely and successfully achieve each of the activities to support the CBP partners as described in Section I.B (10 points) b. How well the application demonstrates that the applicant has the skill, experience, and resources in strategic communication planning and implementation, especially for a multi-partner organization, in order to achieve the objectives of this RFA (10 points); and c. The applicant’s skill and experience in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Managing and responding to media inquiries from multiple media outlets ranging from national to local media markets; supporting requests for interviews with senior level executives and subject matter experts; successfully incorporating themes and messages into media engagement; successfully organizing and hosting press events (10 points); ii. Producing, managing, and recommending targeted communication products for a multi-partner organization, including the ability to communicate to the general public topics that are scientifically complex or of a sensitive political nature; written content for the Web, including but not limited to news posts, fact sheets, backgrounders, digital imagery, and graphics (10 points); iii. Producing and distributing industry-standard multimedia products, including video products and digital still imagery for use on the Web and in social media (5 points); and iv. Successfully organizing and hosting public meetings and forums; and providing communication training (5 points). 	50

<p>2. Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application to assess the applicant’s programmatic capability to successfully perform the proposed activities, considering their:</p> <p>a. Past performance in successfully completing federally- and 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 within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements). Successful completion of federally funded assistance agreements also includes your organization’s history of meeting reporting requirements and submission of acceptable final technical reports under those agreements (8 points).</p> <p>b. Extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress in achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federal agency assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not (8 points).</p> <p><u>Note:</u> In evaluating applicants under Items a. and b. , the reviewers 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, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors; 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 subfactors.</p>	16
<p>3. Cost-effectiveness: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which it is cost-effective, considering the following factors: organizational overhead (indirect costs) and ability to perform the duties within the operational range of budgets provided by the CBP.</p>	6
<p>4. Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which it includes an adequate plan to share information, lessons learned, recommendations, and results from products to CBP partners and stakeholders in the Chesapeake Bay watershed or summarize information so that CBP can disseminate in a timely manner.</p>	6
<p>5. Modernization of Methods Over Time: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the extent to which it addresses the development of recommendations for changes to the existing CBP partnership communication platforms and practices, which will further improve the effectiveness of efforts to raise public awareness and involvement across the diversity of stakeholder communities within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.</p>	6

6. Successful Transition: Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for ensuring they can begin their project as expeditiously as possible after award (e.g., transition plans).	6
7. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.	5
8. Environmental Results: Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the environmental outputs and outcomes identified in Section I.C of the RFA.	5

C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in Section V.B. above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked applications to the director or deputy director of CBPO for final selection. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider programmatic goals and priorities, including those described in the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* at https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement.

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 EPA Solicitation Clauses. These points and the other provisions that can be found at the website link <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>, 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.

VI: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that the applicant will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around **August 23, 2021** either via email or U.S. Postal Service. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application 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 EPA Region 3 grants office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official 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 grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided either via email or U.S. Postal Service.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application package. A federal project officer provides assistance in the application process and negotiates a work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

If your application is selected for funding, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/>

Incurred Costs

Funding eligibility ends on the date specified in the award. The time expended, and costs incurred in either the development of the application or the final assistance application, or in any subsequent discussions or negotiations prior to the award, are neither reimbursable nor recognizable as part of the recipient's cost share.

Allowable Costs

EPA project officers and grant specialists have been provided guidance on determining the allowability and reasonableness of certain cost items under assistance agreements. The guidance indicates that the use of EPA grant funds for evening banquets, evening receptions or for light refreshments and meals at meetings, conferences, training workshops, and outreach activities (events) must be justified by the assistance recipient, identified in the budget detail, must be allowable under the OMB Cost Principles, and approved by the EPA Award Official. Further, EPA will not approve the use of grant funds for any portion of an event where alcohol is served, purchased, or otherwise available even if grant funds are not used to purchase the alcohol.

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Section 1500.11, projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

The QMP must document quality assurance policies and practices that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet program objectives. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-2: EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans (refer to <https://www.epa.gov/quality/epa-qar-2-epa-requirements-quality-management-plans>, Chapter 2). The recipient's QMP should be reviewed and updated annually as needed. The QMP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 45 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation.

The recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is the document that provides

comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Requirements for QAPPs can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/quality/template-developing-generic-quality-assurance-project-plan-or-plan-elements-model>.

Deliverables

The awarded applicant will be required to provide a chart or list of deliverables, providing items and due dates.

C. Reporting

Quarterly or semiannual progress reports, as determined by the federal project officer, will be required as a condition of this award.

D. 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 subawards 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.

E. 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. 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 the regulatory changes, 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.

VII: AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact James Hargett via email at hargett.james@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via email with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-R3-CBP-21-06). All questions and answers will be posted on <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>.

VIII: OTHER INFORMATION

In developing your application, you may find the following documents helpful. Websites for guidance documents are listed here. If you prefer a paper copy, please call 1-800-YOUR BAY.

Boundaries of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/maps>

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement

Electronic copy of the *CBP Guidance for Data Management*

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/201601/documents/attachment8cimsgrant_guidance.pdf

Electronic copy of the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page>

EPA grantee forms

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm>

Electronic copy of the *Chesapeake Bay Program Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance*

<https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/implementation-quality-assurance-requirements-organizations-receiving-epa-financial>

Please visit the EPA Grants website (<https://www.epa.gov/grants>), the EPA Region 3 Grants website (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>) or the Chesapeake Bay Program website (<https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>) if you have questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Further information on CBP committees is located at:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/how_we_are_organized.

Appendix A
Project Narrative Format
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III
Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2021 Requests for Applications (RFA) for
Strategic Communication and Media Support
EPA-R3-CBP-21-06

The following information must be provided, or the application may not be considered complete and may not be evaluated. Applicants are recommended to use the format below for their project narrative.

A. **Project Narrative Format:** Use the Project Narrative Attachment Form in Grants.gov (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. Project narratives as described below shall not exceed 17 single-spaced pages. The project narrative must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 17-page limit includes all supporting materials, resumes or *curriculum vitae*, and letters of support but **excludes** documentation of non-profit status, and other grant forms as listed in Section IV. F. Applicants must ensure that the project narrative clearly identifies the activity number. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

1. Name, address (street and email), and contact information of the applicant

2. Background - Include the following in this section:

- i. Project title.
- ii. Brief description of your organization.
- iii. Documentation of non-profit status, if applicable.
- iv. Brief biographies of applicant lead(s) including resumes and/or curriculum vitae.
- v. Funding requested. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost-share or in-kind resources.
- vi. DUNS number — See Section VI of RFA.

3. Work plan - Include the following in this section:

- i. A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements of the Program as described in Section I of the announcement.
- ii. Budget Detail: For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a budget detail breakdown by the major budget categories (i.e. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). In each of the budgets, include the cost-share amount (a minimum of five percent for each of the total project costs) and demonstrate how the cost-share will be met, including, if applicable, letters of commitment from any third-party contributors. Please note that subaward costs must be itemized under a separate sub-line item within the "Other" budget cost category.

In addition, grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirement for “Administrative Costs” under the Clean Water Act Section 117 (d)(4), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent administration cost cap is in Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet. To calculate the specific cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

- 1) EPA amount (including any in-kind) \div 95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
 - 2) 100% of Total Grant Amount \times 5% = Applicant’s Cost-Share Amount
- iii. Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the project will achieve the expected outputs and outcomes of this RFA.
1. Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outputs include:
 - Coordinate the CBP partnership’s strategic communication objectives,
 - Develop strategic communication plans,
 - Develop and issue press releases,
 - Hold press events,
 - Staff the Communication Workgroup,
 - Develop in draft and final – fact sheets, backgrounders, website content, social media content, digital imagery, and multimedia products as directed by the CBP.
 2. Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. An example of an outcome under this application is increased public awareness and commitment that would result in improving aquatic health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which is in support of EPA/CBP’s strategic goals.
- iv. Review Criteria: Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFA. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative.

With specific respect to the Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance factor in V.B:

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 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.

**Appendix B
EPA-R3-CBP-21-06**

**SAMPLE
(DO NOT SUBMIT WORKSHEET WITH APPLICATION)**

**CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST
CAP WORKSHEET**

INSTRUCTIONS: In accordance with Section 117(d)(4) and 117(e)(6) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the costs of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under Section 117(d) or 117(e) of the CWA shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. The annual grant award is the total costs including Federal and cost share amounts. The worksheet below is provided to assist you in calculating allowable administrative costs. **The Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) should reflect how your administrative costs will comply with the cap.** For specific guidance refer to page 2 of this sample "Compliance with CWA Section 117 Requirements Restricting Administrative Costs."

Total Costs	\$ _____
Cap %	X .10
Limit on Administrative Costs	\$ (a) _____
List Administrative Costs: (Budgeted costs for application)	
_____	\$ _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Total	\$ (b) _____

Line (b) cannot exceed Line (a).

COMPLIANCE WITH CWA SECTION 117 RESTRICTING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Statutory Authority

Under statutory authority, grantees applying for Chesapeake Bay Program grants/cooperative agreements under Section 117 (d) or (e) must adhere to the requirement on administrative costs as follows:

Under Section 117(a)(1) Administrative Cost - The term “administrative cost” means the cost of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under this section.

Under Section 117(d)(4) - Administrative Costs. - Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Under Section 117(e)(6) - Administrative Costs. -Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Guidance for Determining Administrative Costs

As determined by EPA/CBPO, the following provides guidance in determining administrative costs for grants/cooperative agreements under Section 117 (d) and (e) of the Clean Water Act.

1. Administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits charged against the project or program element for the sole purpose of administering the grant/cooperative agreements shall not exceed 10% of the annual grant **award (Federal and cost share)**. One hundred percent of the salaries and fringe benefits related to these functions are considered administrative costs. Examples of administrative costs include, but are not limited to:

- preparation and submission of grant applications
- fiscal tracking of grants funds
- maintaining project files
- collection and submission of deliverables

2. Non-administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits related to the implementation of the project or program element of the grant/cooperative agreement are not considered administrative costs. None of the salaries and fringe benefit costs related to these functions shall be considered administrative costs. Example:

- the salaries and fringe benefits for technical staff to conduct work to accomplish specific Bay Program goals as outlined in the program or project elements are not administrative costs.

3. Calculation of Administrative Costs

In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, use the format above or a similar format to calculate the costs and include in the Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).

4. Questions Regarding Administrative Costs

The grantees shall direct questions to the EPA Project Officer who will determine what costs should be included as administrative costs on a case-by-case basis.