

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2015 Support for Water Quality Framework Training Workshop, Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance, and Hypoxia and Agricultural Nutrient Outreach and Technical Assistance Request for Proposals

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-15-04

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.436

Dates: The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **December 14, 2015 by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST) in order to be considered for funding.**

Proposal packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **December 14, 2015, 11:59 PM EST in order to be considered for funding.** Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency contact identified in Section VII by **November 30, 2015.** Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at <http://www2.epa.gov/ms-htf/fy-2015-support-water-quality-framework-training-workshop-nonpoint-source-agriculture> .

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal have been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

Note to Applicants:

If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your proposal to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to provide support for training and technical assistance activities to build the capacity of state and tribal officials and nongovernmental stakeholders in the Clean Water Act (CWA) Sections 303(d), 305(b), TMDL Programs, the Nonpoint Source (CWA Section 319) Program, and Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia related activities. The National Priority Activities identified in this announcement are:

- (I) to plan, prepare and conduct three State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment;
- (II) to provide and advance Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance; and
- (III) to provide training and technical assistance on Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia and Agricultural-Related Nutrient Issues.

Funds awarded under this announcement for training and technical assistance support activities may be used to promote participation and to support travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend workshops.

Funding provided under this announcement supports Goal 2 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan: Protecting America's Waters; Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. Information on the EPA Strategic Plan is available at <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories, possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public or private non-profit institutions are eligible to apply. Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. Non-profit 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. As discussed in Section I.D, funding for assistance agreements awarded under this announcement is provided under the authority of Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA.

The total amount of expected federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$1,450,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that up to eight awards will be made under this announcement to be funded incrementally. The following are the expected total of awards for each of the three National Priority Activities:

- One award for the State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops (National Priority Activity I) in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment. The award is anticipated to be incrementally funded for a total of \$600,000 over the five-year project period; approximately \$200,000 in the first year and \$100,000 per year for the remaining four years of the project period.
- One to three awards for the Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance (National Priority Activity II) with total funding available of \$350,000. Project awards can range between \$110,000 and \$350,000 per award with a five year project period. This National Priority Area is anticipated to be incrementally funded up to \$70,000 per year.
- Two to four awards for the Hypoxia and Agricultural Nutrient Issues Outreach and Technical Assistance (National Priority Activity III) with total funding available of \$500,000. Project awards can range between \$100,000 and \$250,000 per award with a five year project period; awards over \$100,000 are anticipated to be incrementally funded up to \$50,000 per year.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. BACKGROUND EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to provide support for training, outreach and technical assistance activities to build the capacity of state and tribal officials and nongovernmental stakeholders in the CWA Section 303(d) Program, 305(b), the

TMDL program, the Nonpoint Source (CWA Section 319) Program, and Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia related activities. The three National Priority Activities identified in this announcement and discussed in further detail in Section I.B below are: (I) State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment; (II) Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance; (III) Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia and Agricultural-Related Nutrient Issues. Funds awarded under this announcement for training and technical assistance support activities may be used to promote participation and to support travel expenses of nonfederal personnel to attend the training workshops.

This National Priority Activity supports Goal 2 of EPA’s Strategic Plan for FY 2014 – 2018: Protecting America’s Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. As discussed in Section I.D, the statutory authority for the awards expected to be made under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the CWA.

B. NATIONAL PRIORITY ACTIVITY

Each proposal submitted under this announcement must address one, and only one, of the three National Priority Activities described below. Applicants may submit more than one proposal package (including SF424, SF424A, and proposal narrative) under this announcement as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses only one National Priority Activity. The cover page of each proposal package must clearly indicate the National Priority Activity addressed in the proposal. If an applicant submits a proposal that addresses more than one National Priority Activity, it will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed.

National Priority Activity I: State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops in Support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment

Under this National Priority Activity, the goal is to conduct training workshops to educate state and tribal personnel on new approaches for sharing CWA Sections 303(d), 305(b), and TMDL data. EPA is developing new approaches for sharing these data as part of EPA’s Water Quality Framework (Framework). A goal of the Framework is to more fully integrate water quality monitoring, assessment, and restoration data to provide a more complete picture of the nation’s waters. As a first step in this effort, EPA is redesigning the Assessment TMDL Tracking and Implementation System (ATTAINS). This system tracks state CWA Sections 303(d), 305(b), and TMDL data using a common geospatial framework based on the National Hydrography Dataset Plus (NHD*Plus*). The new ATTAINS system will also integrate national statistical surveys with statewide statistical surveys and site specific assessment data. It is anticipated that these training workshops will educate states and tribes on the following tools: ATTAINS, NHD*Plus*, as well as STORET/WQX, Waterscape, Recover Potential Screening Tool, and Healthy Watersheds Assessments, and how these tools are used for reporting under the CWA, as well as obtain state and tribal input on these systems and how they are used for reporting under the CWA.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and conduct three State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops—over the next five years—in

support of CWA Sections 303(d), 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment. The project components described below provide more detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage these workshops, but is not comprehensive. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional workshop training topic areas and/or project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The target audience for the State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops includes state and tribal monitoring, assessment, CWA Sections 303(d), 305(b), and TMDL program personnel, and may also include local and regional officials, stakeholders, and national experts. If fully funded, an estimated 50 to 60 participants are expected to attend each training workshop with representatives from 50 states and some territorial and tribal representatives, and federal representatives. It is anticipated that workshop participation will be approximately 75% state, 10% tribal, and 15% federal (EPA). Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not select the trainees or participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The goals of the State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops are: (1) to provide training to states and tribes on the new approaches for capturing monitoring, assessment, and TMDL data (including training on the redesigned ATTAINS system, and new approaches for reporting on strategic measures); (2) to solicit feedback from state and tribal personnel on the new ATTAINS data model for tracking these data; (3) to provide information for scoping the integration of these data using a common geospatial framework; and (4) to provide training on other tools being used by states, which include: Recovery Potential Screening Tool (<http://owpubauthor.epa.gov/lawsregs/lawsguidance/cwa/tmdl/recovery/index.cfm>), Waterscape, and Healthy Watersheds Assessments (<http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/watershed/>), and STORET/WQX (<http://www2.epa.gov/waterdata/storage-and-retrieval-and-water-quality-exchange>).

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and conduct the training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The awardee is not expected to develop technical documents or technical training materials for these workshops. EPA will support the training workshops by providing the technical content and training (e.g., develop participant training materials and lead the training sessions to present this technical material). The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with states, tribes, and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to state, tribal, and local governmental agencies and other interested stakeholders. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with state and tribal staff that implement the CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), and TMDL programs and convening meetings and/or trainings that support these programs in coordination with the EPA.

The training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants and to bring as many state, tribal, and territorial information system specialists as possible. Applicants should demonstrate their intent to coordinate, where possible, the training workshops with existing meetings to increase interaction among state, tribal, monitoring and assessment, and TMDL program personnel and to reduce the travel burden on non-federal attendees.

The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the training workshops, select workshop locations, secure meeting facilities (e.g., meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual and information technology (IT) equipment), develop training workshop agendas, develop, where appropriate, non-technical materials, and select the speakers (i.e., plan, prepare, and conduct these workshops). EPA will support the workshops by developing technical documents or technical training materials for these workshops. EPA will support the training workshops by providing the technical content and training (e.g., develop participant training materials and lead the training sessions to present this technical material). The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides.

In their proposals, applicants should describe the technical approach to addressing this National Priority Activity. The proposal should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project elements. The proposal should also include a description of the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results, methods, and/or effective strategies to state, tribe, local agencies, and/or other interested stakeholders so that the others can better build their programs. Effective partnerships are important for the success of projects under this National Priority Activity. In their proposals, applicants should identify appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project. Applicants should also include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. If the applicant chooses to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants), please pay careful attention to the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. EPA will not consider their qualifications unless the applicant selects them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Partnerships between organizations can greatly benefit from one another's experience and expertise.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding one cooperative agreement under this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of approximately \$600,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for the award will be five years, which will include a total of three training workshops over this period, and that the award will be incrementally funded up to \$200,000 in the first year and \$100,000 per year for the remaining four years of the project period, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

National Priority Activity II: Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance

The goals of the Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance National Priority Activity are to: (1) expand the capacity of the agricultural community (including professional retailers and conservation advisors, extension, federal, state and local government and non-government organizations) to build the technical assistance delivery infrastructure for conservation practice systems that protect and improve water quality in agricultural areas and to communicate scientific, technical and/programmatic issues or innovations; (2) foster communication and technical exchanges between the agricultural community and groups implementing watershed plans; and (3) ensure that technical assistance is available to farmers and producers in priority agricultural watersheds as they incorporate conservation practice systems into farm management conservation plans and their long term operations that will improve and protect water quality while enhancing the value of the overall operations. The professional retailers and conservation advisors workforce is expanding and includes, but is not limited to, Technical Service Providers (TSPs), Certified Crop Consultants (CCAs), members of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC), members of Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA), soil and water conservation district staff and engineers, and other agricultural consultants and professionals.

To meet the goals noted above for this National Priority Activity, EPA is soliciting proposals to leverage the expanding professional retailers and conservation advisors workforce to provide training and technical assistance in priority areas most in need of treatment to improve and protect water quality. This can include watersheds that have been identified as state priority areas, USDA priority areas for water quality, NGO ongoing implementation efforts, and areas with state approved nine-element watershed plans or lake plans that call for the implementation of conservation cropping systems to meet water quality goals. Conservation cropping systems is a management strategy that allows a producer to efficiently produce food, feed, and fiber in an environmentally sound manner. The system protects and restores water quality and can include as components nutrient management as part of an overall system, various tile water drainage management practices including water control structures (e.g., flash board structures attached directly to the tile outlets), wetlands placed at the end of the tile lines, riparian buffer strips in areas where lateral seepage is the dominant flow, constructed bioreactors utilizing denitrification walls or trenches to intercept tile flow, saturated buffers, no-till and cover crops.

Project components described below provide detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume. The description below is not comprehensive, and applicants are encouraged to identify additional project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

- Identify priority areas encompassing or within watersheds that have a watershed based plan where conservation practice systems can improve water quality and establish a network of retailers to assist local, untrained retailers with the technical tools and skills needed to implement conservation systems.
 - Identify and leverage outreach opportunities to increase access and usability of conservation planning and implementation tools.
 - Update tools with expanded localized data to increase the eligible landscapes, watersheds and/or states so that tools are more broadly applicable.

- Broadly accelerate the use of conservation practices systems by exchanging technical, economic and implementation information on conservation practice systems and track advancements.
- Establish relationships in priority watersheds between all members of the agricultural professional retailers and conservation advisors workforce so that recently trained members can share new knowledge and tools with others and motivate others to participate in water quality related trainings and projects.
- Increase the capacity of individuals and/or organizations to promote and advance real time/precision nutrient management planning (e.g., utilizing annual manure and soil test results, updated nitrogen and phosphorus risk assessments, and precision application technologies for the land application of manure). This could include development of nutrient management plans for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and state permitted animal feeding operations that are consistent with relevant federal and state requirements and manure management planning tools.
- Encourage strong partnerships between all stakeholders in priority watersheds that can leverage technical assistance and implement conservation systems in identified critical areas that generate nutrient pollution at the watershed scale so professional retailers and conservation advisors can provide outreach to specific landowners.
- Analyze existing technical assistance models and develop a best practices report for technical assistance delivery to farmers and producers through trained professional retailers and conservation advisors to meet water quality goals at the watershed scale.
- Develop and implement a communication plan to encourage participation in priority areas.

Project components proposed under this National Priority Activity do not need to be stand alone, but can be in conjunction with other projects, trainings, workshops, or similar events already planned by other organizations. In their proposals, applicants should be able to demonstrate the commitment by both parties to work together. The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for any training activities, identify appropriate timeframes, select training locations, secure training facilities, develop training agendas and materials, and select speakers. EPA will support the technical assistance by programmatic assistance, program promotion, and review of agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logo on any materials it provides. EPA will use its logo on any materials it provides.

In their proposals, applicants should describe the technical approach to addressing this National Priority Activity. The proposal should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project elements. The proposal should also include a description of the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results, methods, and/or effective strategies to state, tribe, local agencies, and/or other interested stakeholders so that the others can better build their programs. Effective partnerships are important for the success of projects under this National Priority Activity. In their proposals, applicants should identify appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with and convening agricultural professional retailers and conservation professionals. Applicants should also describe a process whereby they will consult with EPA and USDA in which the assistance is to be expended or otherwise made available prior

to providing training and technical assistance in that state, tribe or territory. Applicants should also include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. If the applicant chooses to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants), please pay careful attention to the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. EPA will not consider their qualifications unless the applicant selects them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Partnerships between organizations can greatly benefit from one another's experience and expertise.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding one to three cooperative agreements under this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of \$350,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. Project awards can range between \$110,000 and \$350,000 per award with a five year project period. It is anticipated that this National Priority Area will be incrementally funded up to \$70,000 per year depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

National Priority Activity III: Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia and Agricultural Nutrient Issues Outreach and Technical Assistance

Under this National Priority Activity, the threefold goals are to: 1) strengthen relationships that can serve the missions of multiple organizations/governments working to address nutrient movement and environmental quality goals described in state nutrient reduction strategies; 2) expand the knowledge base through the discovery of new scientific, technical and programmatic innovations, tools and the continual validation of recommended systems of conservation practices; and 3) improve coordination and delivery of educational programming and increase the implementation effectiveness of state nutrient reduction strategies.

The Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force (Hypoxia Task Force or HTF) was established in the fall of 1997 to understand the causes and effects of eutrophication in the Gulf of Mexico; coordinate activities to reduce the size, severity, and duration; and ameliorate the effects of hypoxia. Activities of the HTF include coordinating and supporting nutrient management activities from all sources, restoring habitats to trap and assimilate nutrients, and supporting other hypoxia related activities in the Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico watersheds.

The HTF includes federal and state agencies and tribes. The role of the HTF is to provide executive level direction and support for coordinating the actions of participating organizations working on nutrient management within the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed to reduce the size of the Hypoxic Zone in the Northern Gulf of Mexico. The HTF's 2008 Action Plan is currently being implemented by the member states and agencies of the HTF; a key action called for states to develop and implement nutrient reduction strategies to meet the HTF goals. State strategies can be found at: <http://www2.epa.gov/ms-htf/hypoxia-task-force-nutrient-reduction-strategies>.

The Hypoxia Task Force is working with Southern Extension and Research Activities committee number 46 (SERA-46) through a Memorandum of Understanding. SERA-46 brings together researchers and extension specialists sharing a common interest and expertise related to the environmental, social, and economic factors that contribute to nutrient loss from agricultural lands, state-level nutrient impairments, and hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. This is a formal USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and land-grant university funded committee designed to promote multistate, research and extension activities. Through this partnership, the HTF and SERA-46 have developed research and extension priorities that will assist states as they implement the nutrient reduction strategies developed to implement the HTF 2008 Action Plan.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to provide technical assistance and to develop outreach and training opportunities to support implementation of HTF state nutrient reduction strategies. A list of priorities that the HTF supports can be found at: <http://www2.epa.gov/ms-htf/htf-lgu-priorities-collaborative-work>. EPA is supportive of all priorities on this list as they will provide information to states across the country on challenging issues faced by water programs. Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of this National Priority Activity.

The following are examples of projects which could help advance agricultural nutrient reduction efforts nationally through states/tribal/local government programs:

- Consider current social, economic, and public policy research and opportunities/needs for expansion. Examples include:
 - Develop a social indicators system that will guide, evaluate and advance implementation of strategies to reduce nutrient loss from agricultural lands. This process could consider the input of numerous stakeholders, as well as issues derived from hypoxia- and water resource management-related literature, such as the Social Indicator Planning and Evaluation System (SIPES) Handbook. Once baseline data is collected, it can be used to inform education and outreach in high priority watersheds.
- Create a network of watershed practitioners and farmer leaders to strengthen the implementation effectiveness of nutrient management strategies that reduce nutrient movement.
 - Facilitate the development and activities of a network of watershed practitioners and farmers, prioritizing (but not limited to) the tile-drained areas of the corn belt. This effort would connect watershed practitioners and farmers working in priority watersheds to increase the pace and quality of learning. Topics could include:
 - Communicating the latest research on conservation practices, including cumulative impact of practices and cost effectiveness;
 - Engaging farmers in watershed leadership;
 - Strategies for increasing adoption of conservation practices; and
 - Effective use of monitoring by citizens, farmers, and agency staff in watershed projects at field and watershed scales.

- Case studies and opportunities to scale up to a broader reach and provide information in a variety of media.
- Strengthen partnerships between extension specialists, county agents (where available) and the American Society of Agronomy's Certified Crop Advisors (CCA) to:
 - Identify and summarize pertinent CCA training available in each state, by EPA region or other appropriate organizational entity, and identify gaps and opportunities for new trainings that can assist states in implementing nutrient reduction strategies.
 - Assess the feasibility of more CCAs producing customized whole farm conservation plans.
 - Where appropriate, develop training that addresses state nutrient-related regulations and policies to strengthen nutrient management and reduce nutrient loss from agricultural lands.
 - Facilitate learning among CCAs, agencies, university researchers and extension professionals, and farmers to improve adoption of nutrient management practices that reduce nutrient loss from agricultural lands.
- There is a broad interest to better understand how existing monitoring networks can be used to track nutrient movement and impacts in large landscape and large waterbody areas. In the Mississippi River Basin, the HTF Monitoring Collaborative has identified a number of sites with long term monitoring data, and other large watersheds such as the Chesapeake Bay and the Great Lakes have similar records.
 - Projects that conduct a study or assessment or provide training and/or technical assistance to better understand the scope of both edge-of-field and in-stream monitoring and means to link them for research purposes as well as developing the means to track progress from the field to the watershed to the Gulf, including those that investigate:
 - what research monitoring is being done in the HTF states;
 - where is it being done;
 - what is the focus of each study;
 - what water quality data are being obtained at different scales;
 - what other data are being obtained;
 - how is the data being used;
 - what is the availability of the data; and
 - how is monitoring being funded?
 - Projects that allow watershed planners and/or state program managers the ability to assess and/or provide training to these groups so that they may determine:
 - what data are needed at different scales;
 - where will it come from;
 - how will it be used;
 - what will be the data security, confidentiality and ownership;
 - who will do the data collection;
 - what will it cost;
 - how will it be funded;
 - what data is already being obtained; and

- how is it being used?

In their proposals, applicants should describe the technical approach to addressing this National Priority Area. The proposal should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project elements. The proposal should also include a description of the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results, methods, and/or effective strategies to state, tribe, local agencies, and/or other interested stakeholders so that the others can better build their programs. Effective partnerships are important for the success of projects under this National Priority Area. In their proposals, applicants should identify appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project. Applicants should also include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. If the applicant chooses to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants), please pay careful attention to the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. EPA will not consider their qualifications unless the applicant selects them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Partnerships between organizations can greatly benefit from one another's experience and expertise.

Project components proposed under this National Priority Activity do not need to be stand alone, but can be held in conjunction with other projects, trainings, workshops, or similar projects already planned by other organizations. In their proposals Applicants should be able to demonstrate the commitment by all parties to work together. The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the project. The successful applicant will use its logo on any materials it provides. EPA will use its logo on any materials it provides.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding up two to four cooperative agreements under this this National Priority Activity for a range of project funding of approximately \$100,000 - \$250,000 per award, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. The total funding available for this National Priority is \$500,000. It is anticipated that the project period for the awards will be five years, and that the awards over \$100,000 will be incrementally funded up to \$50,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Funding provided under this announcement supports Goal 2 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan: Protecting America's Waters; Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. Information on the EPA Strategic Plan is available at <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

All proposed projects must demonstrate the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan and 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 overall goals of the EPA Strategic Plan. Projects should demonstrate the linkage to the overall goal of Protecting America's Waters.

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or 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 anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

National Priority Activity: State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops in Support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment

- Organization and administration of training workshops to educate state and tribal personnel on system/tools to support implementation of the 303(d) Vision
- Written report that identifies training gaps and needs for state, tribal, and federal agency personnel

National Priority Activity: Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance

- Network of agriculture retailers and conservation professionals formed with the technical skills to install and/or improve conservation practice systems in areas with a need for water quality improvement.
- Written report presenting effective/best practices for technical assistance delivery.
- Increased development and implementation of real time/precision nutrient management plans.

National Priority Activity: Hypoxia and Agricultural Nutrient Issues Outreach and Technical Assistance

- Tools and/or guides to help state/tribal/local government decision makers integrate metrics into state nutrient reduction strategies and advance implementation of strategies to reduce nutrient loss from agricultural lands.
- Organization and administration of trainings to educate and connect watershed practitioners and farmer leaders.
- Organization and administration of trainings to educate and connect extension specialists, county agents and CCAs.
- Methods to link edge-of-field and in-stream water quality monitoring information.
- Protocols and/or guides to assess, prioritize, and/or track (report on) voluntary implementation as a result of partnerships.

Environmental outcomes are 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, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (changes

in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

National Priority Activity I: State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in Support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment

- Improved CWA 303(d), CWA 305(b), and TMDL reporting, including the transition from paper to an electronic process.
- More effective and transparent demonstration of environmental progress in water quality protection and restoration.
- Reduced reporting burden on states and tribes.
- More timely submittal and review of CWA 303(d) data.

National Priority Activity II: Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance

- Increased capacity of groups that are implementing watershed plans that meet water quality goals to work in partnerships with agriculture and conservation retailers, advisors and professionals.
- Increased state and/or NGO watershed projects being implemented in partnership with professional retailers and conservation professionals.
- Increased understanding by agricultural producers of their role and the roles of other stakeholders and partners in broader watershed projects that have positive nutrient impacts on water quality.

National Priority Activity III: Hypoxia and Agricultural Nutrient Issues Outreach and Technical Assistance

- Improved opportunities for state nutrient reduction strategies to be implemented.
- Application of informed, scientifically valid approaches to watershed planning that will protect, prevent, and reduce pollution to aquatic resources.

As part of the proposal narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of outputs and outcomes can be found at:

http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-03/documents/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf.

D. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be funded under this announcement is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. CWA Section 104(b)(3) restricts the use of these assistance agreements to the following: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement. If the proposal is a demonstration project, then the applicant must describe how it

meets the following requirement. Demonstration projects must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches. EPA expects that 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 a demonstration project. For proposals that include demonstration projects, the applicant must describe how the project meets the above requirements.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

The total amount of expected federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$1,450,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that up to eight awards will be made under this announcement to be funded incrementally. The following are the expected total of awards for each of the three National Priority Activities:

- One award for the State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops (National Priority Activity I) in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment (National Priority Activity I). The award is anticipated to be incrementally funded for a total of \$600,000 over the five-year project period; approximately \$200,000 in the first year and \$100,000 per year for the remaining four years of the project period.
- One to three awards for the Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance (National Priority Activity II) with total funding available of \$350,000. Project awards can range between \$110,000 and \$350,000 per award with a five year project period. This National Priority Area is anticipated to be incrementally funded up to \$70,000 per year.
- Two to four awards for the Hypoxia and Agricultural Nutrient Issues Outreach and Technical Assistance (National Priority Activity III) with total funding available of \$500,000. Project awards can range between \$100,000 and \$250,000 per award with a five year project period; awards over \$100,000 are anticipated to be incrementally funded up to \$50,000 per year.

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

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement. In addition, 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 selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

It is anticipated that cooperative agreements will be funded under this announcement. When a cooperative agreement is awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for a project selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
2. Collaboration in the selection of training and technical assistance topics.
3. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
4. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements;
5. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); and
6. Review and comment on tasks/deliverables and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement(s) (the final decision on the content of these reports rests with the recipient).

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories, possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public or private non-profit institutions are eligible to apply. Individuals and for-profit entities are not eligible. Non-profit 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.

An intertribal consortium is a partnership between two or more tribes that is authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance. (See 40 CFR 35.502.) The intertribal consortium is eligible only if the consortium demonstrates that all of its members meet the eligibility requirements and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance in accordance with 40 CFR 35.504 at the time of proposal submission. An intertribal consortium must submit with its proposal to EPA adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the consortium by its members to apply for and receive the grant. (See 40 CFR 35.504.) Non-profit applicants may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a non-profit organization in 2 CFR Subpart E.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

No cost-share/match is required under this announcement.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement.

Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement.
2. Each proposal submitted under this announcement must address one, and only one of the three national Priority Activities (Activity I, II, or III) listed in Section 1.B. Applicants may submit more than one proposal package (including SF424, SF424A, and proposal narrative) under this announcement as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses **only one** National Priority Activity. The cover page of each proposal package must clearly indicate the National Priority Activity addressed in the proposal. If an applicant submits a proposal that addresses more than one National Priority Activity, it will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed.
3. Except as stated below, proposals must **substantially comply** with the proposal 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.C.3 with respect to the proposal narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.C.3 establishes a 10-page, single-spaced proposal narrative page limit that includes the cover page
4. Proposals must be for projects that improve water quality by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.
5. An applicant may submit a proposal requesting up to a maximum federal amount for each National Priority Activity (Activity I, II, or III). If an applicant submits a proposal that requests more than maximum federal amount for the National Priority Activity, it will be rejected from further consideration. Proposals for awards under National Priority Activity I cannot exceed \$600,000. Proposals for awards under National Priority Activity II cannot exceed \$350,000. Proposals under National Priority Activity III cannot exceed \$250,000.
6. Proposals must be submitted through 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 proposal 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 proposal is timely submitted.
7. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due, to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems solely attributable to the Grants.gov website or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Concepcion Cahanap at OWOW-RFP@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline -- failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

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

IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. HOW TO OBTAIN A PROPOSAL PACKAGE

Applicants can download individual grant application forms, including Standard Forms (SF) 424 and SF 424A, from the EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at:

<http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-grantee-forms>.

B. FORM OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

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

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact 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 Barbara Perkins
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Barbara Perkins
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Rm # 51267
Washington, DC 20004

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Organization Name and 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 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 proposal content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2015, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2015). 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, 2015 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2016, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2016.

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. 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 <http://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, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose 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 <http://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 <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OW-OWOW-15-04**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.436), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click "Browse Agencies" in the middle of the page and then go to "Environmental Protection Agency" to find the EPA funding opportunities.

For Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) **submission questions**, please call the Grants.gov 24-hour helpline at 1-800-518-4726 or visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **December 14, 2015**. **Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process 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 that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the "Show Instructions" tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Application Materials:

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Proposal Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IVC.3 of the announcement

Optional Documents:

4. Other Attachments, if applicable

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 Concepcion Cahanap, at (202) 566-1382. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

c. Technical Issues With Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced or a revised application needs to be submitted.

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear. ***Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. 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 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 Concepcion Cahanap with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Concepcion Cahanap at 202-566-1382. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to

www.Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov 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 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 Concepcion Cahanap at 202-566-1382

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, send an email message to OWOW-RFP@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 promptly send an email to Concepcion Cahanap 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.

C. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely and address all requirements thoroughly. A complete proposal package must include the following three documents described below:

All proposal packages must include the following three documents:

1. Signed Standard Form 424 (SF-424), Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form and have it signed. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun 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 by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

2. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A), Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs

Complete the form. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the total indirect amount should also be indicated on line 22. In Section B: Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for non-federal cost-share/match, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (federal funds and non-federal cost share/match).

3. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative, items A-E below, must be limited to no more than ten (10) typewritten single-spaced 8.5 x 11 inch pages (a page is one side of paper) (**except** for documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. **Additional pages beyond the 10 page limit will not be considered.** The proposal narrative will be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 10 single-spaced page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials (such as annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit for the proposal narrative. Any documentation pertaining to Quality Assurance/Quality Control is also not included in the page limit for the proposal narrative.

The proposal narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below in items 1-5. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal narrative.

1. **Cover Page (included in the page limit)** including:
 - a. Project title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less);
 - b. Name of applicant
 - c. National Priority Activity from Section I.B addressed in the proposal (**proposals must address only one National Priority Activity per proposal package**);
 - d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
 - e. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested and the total project cost); and
 - f. Abstract/project summary (recommended 75 words or less): Provide a brief description of the proposed project.

2. **Project Description** containing:
 - a. Technical Approach – Describe how the proposal addresses the National Priority described in Section I.B of this announcement. Outline the steps you will take to plan, prepare, and conduct the training workshops and/or technical assistance and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops and/or technical assistance. Include a description of the

approach for consulting with interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities. If travel assistance is to be provided for non-federal attendees, describe the process for selecting non-federal attendees who may receive travel assistance.

- b. Environmental Results and Measuring Progress -
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan – Provide the objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2: Protecting America’s Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems (see Section I.C of this announcement);
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project activities and an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement); and
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of the project activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of project outputs. Describe an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement).
- c. Milestone Schedule – Provide a projected milestone schedule that covers each year of the proposed project period. The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks. Include an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow acceptance of the award by the successful applicant.
- d. Transfer of Results – Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to interested stakeholders.
- e. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) (not counted in page limit) - If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A, QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC), of this announcement for additional information). Note: Development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required of all EPA assistance agreements that fund data collection and assessment and information analysis. The cost of the QAPP development should be included in the proposed budget.

3. **Detailed Budget Narrative:** Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A such as “other” and “contractual”. All subaward funding should be located under the “other” cost category.
 - a. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total cost. All subaward funding should be located in the “other” cost category. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for the EPA to determine their reasonableness and the allowability of costs for each project component/task. If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-federal attendees to attend workshops. Helpful tips on writing a budget may be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/office-grants-and-debarment-budget-detail-guidance>

4. **Programmatic Capability/Specialized Experience**
 - a. Staff Expertise/Qualifications - Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). Annotated resumes of the applicant’s key staff are also encouraged but not required, should be provided as attachments, and are not counted in the page limit.
 - b. Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of the applicant’s organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization’s infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
 - c. Specialized Experience – For National Priority Activity I, include a description of your experience working with and convening state, tribal, and federal agencies responsible for implementing the CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), and TMDL programs. For National Priority Activity II, include a description of your experience working with and convening agricultural professional retailers and conservation professionals. For National Priority Activity III, include a description of your experience in working with and convening state, tribal, and federal agencies to effectively address hypoxia and nutrient reduction strategies.

5. **Past Performance:** Briefly describe federally funded 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:

- a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
- b. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
- c. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress toward achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

Note: In evaluating applicant's past performance, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in the proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see Section V.A.).

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its proposal narrative any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposals submitted electronically via grants.gov must be **received** by **11:59 P.M. EST, December 14, 2015**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR APPLICANTS INCORPORATED INTO THE SOLICITATION

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, which are incorporated by reference, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information and contracts and subawards under grants, can be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing 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.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package.

<p>1) Technical Approach (30 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal addresses one of the National Priority Activities (Activity I, II or III,) identified in Section I.B of the announcement. (30 points)</p>
<p>2) Milestone Schedule/ Detailed Budget/Transfer of Results (15 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates each of the following sub-criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The adequacy and completeness of the milestone schedule for project tasks, including timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks. In addition, whether there is a clearly articulated approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner will also be evaluated. (5 points) b) The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. (5 points) c) The adequacy of the description on how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to interested stakeholders. (5 points)
<p>3) Environmental Results (15 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA’s Strategic Plan (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (10 points) b) The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (5 points)
<p>4) Programmatic Capability/ Specialized Experience (20 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant’s ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Organizational experience related to the proposed project and infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (10 points)

	<p>b) Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points)</p> <p>c) Specialized experience applicable as described in Section I.B. (5 points)</p>
<p>5) Past Performance (20 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors:</p> <p>a) Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements). (10 points)</p> <p>b) History of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (5 points)</p> <p>c) Extent and quality to which the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (5 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items a), b), and c) above, the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (e.g., Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). Applicants who have no relevant or available past performance information will receive a neutral score for these factors (i.e., 5 points for subcriterion a), 2.5 points for subcriterion b), and 2.5 points for subcriterion c). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do</p>

	not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factors (i.e., zero points for subcriterion a), zero points for subcriterion b), and zero points for subcriterion c).
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B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by EPA via grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A review panel will be set up for each National Priority Activity to review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. The review panels will develop a separate ranked list of the proposals for each National Priority Activity based on the scores received. The ranking list for each National Priority Activity will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions for each National Priority Activity, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account program priorities.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Following EPA’s evaluation of the proposals, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance, nor is it a guarantee that the award will be made.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement.
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component.
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment.
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with 40 CFR §35.115.
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

The selected project will be posted on EPA’s website at <http://www2.epa.gov/ms-hf/fy-2015-support-water-quality-framework-training-workshop-nonpoint-source-agriculture>. This website may also contain additional information about this RFP. Deadline extensions or other modifications, if any, will be posted on this website and <http://www.grants.gov/>.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

This award is subject to the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Title 2 CFR, Parts 200 and 1500. 2 CFR 1500.1, Adoption of 2 CFR 200, states that the Environmental Protection Agency adopts the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards to Non-Federal Entities (subparts A through F of 2 CFR 200), as supplemented by this part, as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policies and procedures for financial assistance administration. This part satisfies the requirements of 2 CFR 200.110(a) and gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance as supplemented by this part. EPA also has programmatic regulations located in 40 CFR Chapter 1 Subchapter B.

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 <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/dispute-resolution-procedures>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement.

D. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted semi-annually and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the workplan consistent with 2 CFR 328, Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance, and 40 CFR Part 45. This includes any problems, issues or difficulties encountered that may affect the quality requirements of the project. The recipient must indicate what if any corrective actions were taken. Award recipients will be required to submit the final report electronically and in hard copy and should include, in addition, a 1-2 page project summary. If travel assistance is provided to selected attendees to attend workshops, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the workshops.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her state for more information on the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the state has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

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 <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing 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.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Note to Applicants: In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about any of the language or provisions in the announcement. **Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in Section VII as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting a proposal.** In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making an eligibility determination. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **November 30, 2015**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at <http://www2.epa.gov/ms-hf/fy-2015-support-water-quality-framework-training-workshop-nonpoint-source-agriculture>.

Agency Contact

Concepcion Cahanap

E-mail: OWOW-RFP@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)

QA/QC requirements may be applicable to these assistance agreements (see 2 CFR 1500.11). 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 Agency Contact (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

If water quality data is generated, either directly or by subaward, the successful applicant must ensure all water quality data is transmitted into the Agency's Storage and Retrieval (STORET) Data Warehouse annually or by project completion using either WQX or WQXweb in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan. Water quality data that are appropriate for STORET include physical, chemical, and biological sample results for water, sediment and fish tissue. The data include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is the water data schema associated with the EPA, State and Tribal Exchange Network. Using the WQX schema partners map their database structure to the WQX/STORET structure. WQXweb is a web-based tool to convert data into the STORET format for smaller data generators that are not direct partners on the Exchange Network. More information about WQX, WQXweb, and the STORET Warehouse, including tutorials, can be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/waterdata/storage-and-retrieval-and-water-quality-exchange>.