

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

**Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2016 and FY 2017 National Wetland Program Development Grants

**Announcement Type:** Request for Proposals

**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-OW-OWOW-16-02

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 66.462

**Dates:** All proposals must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov as explained further in Section IV. Proposals must be submitted by **11:59 P.M. EDT June 23, 2016**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **June 10, 2016**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>.

**Note to Applicants: Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.** Final application(s) will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal(s) 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. 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 <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

## **SUMMARY**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants for projects that develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs as a whole, or individual components of those programs. Proposals for projects submitted under this announcement for Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) must address the National Priority Area identified in Section I.B.

Awards made under this announcement will support EPA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters; Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. Information on the FY 2014 – 2018 EPA Strategic Plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>.

Eligible applicants under this announcement are non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs.<sup>1</sup> Non-profit private universities and colleges and non-profit institutions of higher education are considered non-profit organizations and are eligible under this announcement. **Individual states, tribes, local governments, and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply under this announcement.** 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. Interstate agencies must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504. Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504. Non-profit organizations may be asked to provide documentation

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act at 31 USC Sec. 6101, the term "nonprofit organization" means "any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that - (A) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (B) is not organized primarily for profit; and (C) uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization."

that they meet the definition of a non-profit organization in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Circular 2 CFR Part 230 (non-profit organizations).

All projects submitted under this announcement must be nationwide in scope or involve and/or otherwise benefit at least one state/tribe in at least two or more EPA Regions (a map of EPA Regions can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa#pane-4>). As discussed in Section I.C of this announcement, the statutory authority for the awards funded under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). **Implementation projects are not eligible under this announcement.**

The total amount of expected federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$800,000 (\$400,000 expected from FY 2016 and \$400,000 expected from FY 2017), depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match requirement).

It is anticipated that approximately three to eight awards will be incrementally funded. The federal portion of the awards for projects selected will range from \$75,000 to \$200,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the projects. It is anticipated that awards under this announcement will have one- to four-year project periods.

## **I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The goals of EPA's Wetlands Program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the United States by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. Under the WPDGs, EPA seeks to build the capacity of all levels of government to develop or refine effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management. This announcement seeks proposals from eligible applicants for projects that develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs as a whole, or individual components of those programs. As discussed in Section I.C, the statutory authority for the awards funded under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the CWA.

### **B. NATIONAL PRIORITY AREA**

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants for projects that develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs as a whole, or individual components of those programs. Comprehensive wetland programs enable state/tribal/local governments to more effectively protect, restore, and manage their wetland resources. Each proposal submitted under this announcement must address the National Priority Area described below. Applicants may submit more than one complete proposal under this announcement for different projects as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses the National Priority Area.

#### **National Priority Area: Core Elements Framework**

Experience with many state and tribal wetland programs has distilled a set of core elements, actions, and activities that together comprise a comprehensive wetland program. EPA has summarized these common core elements, actions, and activities in the *Core Elements of an Effective State and Tribal Wetlands Program Framework*, also called the *Core Elements Framework* (CEF). EPA's CEF can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/wetlands/core-elements-effective-state-and-tribal-wetlands-programs>.

The CEF describes in greater detail each of the four core elements that comprise a comprehensive state/tribal wetland program. These four core elements are:

- monitoring and assessment;

- voluntary restoration and protection;
- regulatory approaches, including CWA 401 certification; and
- wetland-specific water quality standards.

Under this National Priority Area, EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants for projects that target state/tribal/local government program officials, staff, and/or other interested stakeholders, and address state/tribal/local government wetland program development or refinement. These projects should help state/tribal/local governments examine wetland-related problems (e.g., wetland loss of acreage or function, public perception of the value of wetland, and management of wetland resources); program development needs (*i.e.*, *Monitoring and Assessment*, *Voluntary Restoration/Protection*, *Regulatory Approaches*, and *Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*); and/or develop solutions to wetland-related problems by creatively applying the full array of available planning, technical, outreach/education, and financial tools or developing such tools.

**Accordingly, applicants must demonstrate in their proposal how the proposed project will develop or refine a state/tribal/local government wetland program by indicating which core element(s) (*i.e.*, *Monitoring and Assessment*; *Voluntary Restoration and Protection*; *Regulatory Approaches*; and/or *Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*) their proposal addresses.** All projects submitted under this announcement must be nationwide in scope or involve and/or otherwise benefit at least one state/tribe in at least two or more EPA Regions (a map of EPA Regions can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa#pane-4>).

**Examples of projects which could help develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Monitoring and Assessment Core Element include but are not limited to:**

- Projects to conduct studies or provide training on how state and tribal wetlands monitoring methods and condition assessment data can be used to inform wetland management and decision making in support of the other three core elements (*i.e.*, *Voluntary Restoration and Protection*; *Regulatory Approaches*; and *Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*) including projects that provide information on the effects of climate change on wetland condition.
- Projects that develop the use of reference wetland condition data to test and calibrate wetland assessment methods.
- Projects to conduct studies or provide training on how assessment data collected in the 2011 and 2016 National Wetland Condition Assessment can be utilized to develop the capacity of state/tribal/local government to statistically analyze wetland monitoring data. (e.g., wetland population estimates, indices of wetland condition, biological integrity, floristic quality, etc).
- Projects that develop electronic or online tools that streamline the collection, analysis, or presentation of state and tribal monitoring and assessment data.
- Projects that develop Wetland Monitoring and Assessment regional work groups, including holding work group meetings or workshops.
- Projects to conduct studies on Wetland Monitoring and Assessment.
- Project that develop Wetland Mapping regional work groups and hold work group meetings or workshops to conduct studies or promote wetland mapping efforts.
- Projects that provide training for state/tribal/local governments to map or update maps of wetlands using the new National Wetland Mapping Standard or digitize the wetlands mapping information.

Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of the Monitoring and Assessment Core Element.

**Examples of projects which could help develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Voluntary Restoration and Protection Core Element include but are not limited to:**

- Projects to develop and provide targeted outreach and/or training for specific key citizens, watershed groups, or non-profit organizations on the benefits of voluntary wetland restoration, protection, and improvement activities to help overcome barriers in carrying out these types of activities.
- Projects to protect/restore wetlands through the study of environmental processes to develop methods to identify wetlands that may be affected by climate change, or areas that are likely to become wetlands due to climate change.
- Projects to develop work groups, processes or mechanisms to enhance collaboration efforts with other parties (including land trust organizations, state wildlife agencies, local governments, agriculture agencies, etc.) to share/integrate differing priorities and missions that will affect wetland voluntary restoration/protection (e.g., watershed plans, nonpoint source management plans, State Wildlife Action Plans, etc.).
- Projects to develop or share tools to identify areas with high restoration potential or restoration practices and provide this information through a variety of media.
- Projects that study and develop tools or processes on the effects and benefits of landscape placement of wetlands on watershed or ecological condition.
- Projects that test or improve approaches to reduce shoreline hardening and/or enhance coastal resiliency using nature-based solutions such as coastal marsh restoration or living shorelines.
- Projects that develop tools and procedures to evaluate the ecological effectiveness of different restoration efforts, such as establishment, re-establishment, enhancement, and rehabilitation.
- Projects that develop tools for long-term maintenance and protection of voluntary restoration sites.

Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of the Voluntary Restoration and Protection Core Element.

**Examples of projects which could help develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Regulatory Approaches Core Element include but are not limited to:**

- Projects to provide technical assistance and training to non-federal stakeholders on the CWA section 404 permitting process.
- Projects that develop new mechanisms for coordinating wetland protection across regulatory agencies or levels of government (e.g., integrating assessment of wetland presence into municipal building permit approval processes or increasing collaboration between a state's wetland program and forestry commission on silviculture BMPs for forested wetlands).
- Projects to develop tools or procedures to evaluate the ecological performance of wetland/stream compensatory mitigation projects (e.g., mitigation banks, in-lieu fee projects and permittee-responsible mitigation).
- Projects to develop tools and procedures to help state/tribal/local government programs to fill the gaps in federal protection on the basis of their own priorities.
- Projects to conduct studies or provide training on how wetland monitoring methods can be used to answer large scale (i.e., regional or national) questions about the performance of wetlands created, restored, or protected through the compensatory mitigation process and provide this information through a variety of media.
- Projects to develop tools and/or guides to incorporate wetland issues into broader watershed planning and watershed management goals and to reflect the contribution of rare types of waters or wetland types that may be effected by climate change to the broader aquatic ecosystem.

- Projects that will develop and support a sustained discussion forum on the use of state, tribal and local CWA section 401 authority.

Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of the Regulatory Approaches Core Element.

**Examples of projects which could help develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards Core Element include but are not limited to:**

- Projects to describe and broadly communicate the state of the science for establishing water quality standards for wetlands including workshops and conferences.
- Projects to conduct studies and provide training on model approaches for selecting wetland-specific designated uses and supporting criteria.
- Projects to identify ways that states and tribes with limited resources can approach the development of water quality standards for wetlands and provide this information through a variety of media.
- Projects that will develop and support a sustained discussion forum for studying differing aspects of developing and promulgating wetland water quality standards among a variety of interested non-federal stakeholders.
- Projects to demonstrate or develop tools that show how monitoring and assessment data can be used in the development of state wetland water quality standards.
- Projects that demonstrate the use of narrative templates for Wetland Water Quality Standards as a basis for developing new state/tribal wetland water quality standards.

Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of the Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards Core Element.

Funds awarded under this National Priority Area for training sessions, work group meetings, or workshops may be used by recipients to promote participation and to support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel. Assistance funds under this National Priority Area may be used by the successful applicant to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees at training sessions, work group meetings, or workshops. The applicant will select meeting locations, secure meeting facilities (e.g., meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop meeting agendas and materials, and select the speakers. EPA intends to co-sponsor these events under the Agency's Ethics Advisory 96-15 agreements. EPA will support these events as a co-sponsor by providing technical assistance, promotion of the events, review of agendas, and printed materials. The successful applicant will be responsible for determining any registration fees and for establishing and managing a waiver process of any fees for specific individuals (e.g., speakers, tribal officials, etc.). The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides. 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 sessions, meetings, or workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

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, tribal, local governmental agencies, and/or other interested stakeholders so that the others can better build their wetland programs. Examples of ways to transfer results include:

- i. Share results on a website and share the website address with relevant organizations;
- ii. Present results at forums typically attended by representatives from state/tribal/local government wetland programs;
- iii. Document how you intend to share results with a relevant state/tribal/local government wetland program; and
- iv. Conduct a webinar or other outreach to state/tribes/local governments at relevant conferences.

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 information to the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses> before doing so as 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.

### **C. STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these assistance agreements to improving wetland programs by: 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. Projects that are demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches where the results of demonstration projects will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained from the demonstration projects. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

Funds received under this announcement cannot be used for the purchase of land or conservation easements. Proposal tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit (e.g., CWA section 404 permit, CWA section 402 permit, CWA section 401 certification) or federal, state, tribal, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are not eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed only for the purposes of treating wastewater or stormwater. Funds cannot be used to fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property. Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes, etc.) and office furniture are not eligible for funding under this program. The lease of vehicles may be eligible for funding, but is contingent on justification of need in the proposal narrative. Funds cannot be used for activities to implement a wetlands program, for fundraising, or for gifts. Projects must be performed entirely within the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories (i.e., Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa). Proposed projects must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

Wetland mapping as part of a project to build a state/tribal/local government program to research, investigate, experiment, train, demonstrate, survey, and study the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution is eligible for funding. Funds used for mapping wetlands must use the "National Wetland Mapping Standard" (<http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC->

[standards-projects/wetlands-mapping/2009-08%20FGDC%20Wetlands%20Mapping%20Standard\\_final.pdf](#) ) developed by a work group of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and cannot be used for mapping of wetlands that do not use this standard. Applicants can propose to form "Wetland Mapping Coalitions" to fund regional (two or more states and/or tribes) mapping efforts.

#### **D. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems, of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>).

Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters -- Protect and restore waters to ensure that drinking water is safe and sustainably managed, and that aquatic ecosystems sustain fish, plants, wildlife, and other biota, as well as economic, recreational, and subsistence activities.

Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems -- Protect, restore, and sustain the quality of rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands on a watershed basis, and sustainably manage and protect coastal and ocean resources and ecosystems.

All proposed projects must demonstrate a linkage to the Strategic Plan priorities 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 restoring and protecting healthy communities and ecosystems.

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Expected 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 outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Criteria for assessing the condition of wetlands (qualitative – may be measured as whether criteria have been developed).
- Tools and/or guides to help state/tribal/local government decision makers integrate wetland protection into broader watershed planning (quantitative – may be measured as number of tools developed or number of organizations receiving materials).
- Organization and administration of workshops to educate and train partners (e.g., workshops for local governments on ordinances to protect wetlands) (qualitative – may be measured by attendee comments or evaluations, or quantitative – number of attendees).
- Methods and/or criteria protocols to assess the success of a mitigation site (qualitative – may be measured by whether methods have been developed).
- Methods to develop water quality standards (qualitative – may be measured by whether methods have been developed).
- Smartphone or tablet apps to facilitate monitoring data collection and sharing (qualitative – may be measured by whether methods have been developed).
- Protocols and/or guides to assess, prioritize, and/or track (report on) voluntary restoration sites (qualitative – may be measured by whether tracking system has been developed).

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 may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. 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:

- Increase in knowledge (may be measured by pre- and post-training assessments).
- Improved wetland protection efforts (may be measured in percent of protection sites meeting performance criteria).
- Application of informed, scientifically valid approaches to watershed planning that will protect, prevent, and reduce pollution to wetlands and other aquatic resources (may be measured through the use of decision framework or model analysis).
- Increased understanding of how to ensure "no net loss" in quality and quantity of wetlands in the CWA section 404 regulatory program (assessment of wetland function and condition).

As part of the proposal workplan, applicants are 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:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/linking-assistance-agreements-environmental-results>.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING**

The total amount of expected federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$800,000 (\$400,000 expected from FY 2016 and \$400,000 expected from FY 2017), depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match requirement).

It is anticipated that approximately three to eight awards will be incrementally funded under this announcement. The federal portion of the awards for projects selected will range from \$75,000 to \$200,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the projects. It is anticipated that awards under this announcement will have one to four year project periods.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. 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, or make fewer awards than anticipated. 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 grants and cooperative agreements may be funded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplan 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 projects selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance.
2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work.
3. In accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart D (200.317 through 200.326) as appropriate, review of proposed procurements.
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient).
5. Review and comment on content of tasks/deliverables and reports/publications (printed or electronic) prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

## III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants under this announcement are non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs.<sup>2</sup> Non-profit private universities and colleges and non-profit institutions of higher education are considered non-profit organizations and are eligible under this announcement. **Individual states, tribes, local governments, and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply under this announcement.** 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. EPA may ask applicants to demonstrate that they are eligible for funding under this announcement including demonstrating that they are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs.

Interstate agencies must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504. The term "interstate agency" is defined in CWA Section 502 as "an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." Interstate agencies may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority which establishes their status.

Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR Part 35.504 (see [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=41e08409109e3bb8c0f71dd6c561d3e2&mc=true&node=se40.1.35\\_1504&rgn=div8](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=41e08409109e3bb8c0f71dd6c561d3e2&mc=true&node=se40.1.35_1504&rgn=div8)). 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

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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.).

Nonprofit organizations may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a nonprofit organization in OMB Cost Circular 2 CFR Part 230 (non-profit organizations). Copies of OMB circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>.

## **B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS**

**All applicants must demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will contribute a minimum non-federal cost share/match of 25 percent of the total project costs (*total federal share and applicant cost share/match*) in accordance with 40 CFR 35.385, and 35.615. This means that EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost.**

The cost share/match may be provided in cash or can come from in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, etc., subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 CFR 200.306 , as applicable. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. The cost share/match must be for eligible and allowable project costs. Cost share/matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and must be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the workplan. All grant funds are subject to federal audit and are subject to the regulations governing cost share/matching fund requirements at 2 CFR 200.306. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of funding restrictions are outlined in Section I.C and III.D of this announcement) also apply to the use of cost share/matching funds. Other federal grants may not be used as cost share/match without specific statutory authority. **Applicants that do not demonstrate how they will meet the minimum 25 percent cost share/match requirement in their proposal submission will not be considered for funding.**

The minimum cost share/match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four. EPA will use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{4} = \text{minimum cost share/match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$100,000 in order to meet the 25 percent cost share/match requirement, the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions and would receive a maximum of \$75,000 in federal funds from EPA.

**OR**

$$\frac{\text{Total Federal Funds Requested (\$)}}{3} = \text{minimum cost share/match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total federal funds requested** are \$75,000 the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match.

## **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. 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. In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal workplan, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.C.3 establishes a 10-page, single-spaced proposal workplan page limit that includes the cover page. If a double-spaced proposal workplan is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 10 single-spaced (20 page double-spaced) page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed.
2. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement at the time of proposal submission.
3. An applicant must demonstrate that they can meet the cost share/match requirements in Section III.B of this announcement at the time of proposal submission.
4. All proposals submitted under this announcement must be for projects that address the National Priority Area listed in Section I.B. Applicants may submit more than one complete proposal under this announcement as long as each one is for a different project and is separately submitted and addresses the National Priority Area. In addition, applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will develop or refine a state/tribal local government wetland program by indicating which core element(s) their proposal addresses (*i.e.*, *Monitoring and Assessment; Voluntary Restoration and Protection; Regulatory Approaches; and/or Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*).
5. All projects submitted under this announcement must be nationwide in scope or involve and/or otherwise benefit at least one state/tribe in at least two or more EPA Regions (a map of EPA Regions can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/where.html> ).
6. Proposals must be for projects that improve wetland programs by 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.** Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained from 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.
7. If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible activities set forth in Section III.D, 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.
8. Proposals must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) as specified in Section IV, PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION, 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.
9. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to the EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant Sam.gov system issues and not the applicant. 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 Myra Price at [price.myra@epa.gov](mailto:price.myra@epa.gov) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

#### **D. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

- Funds cannot be used to fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property.
- Funds cannot be used for the purchase of land or conservation easements.
- Proposal tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit (e.g., CWA section 404 permit, CWA section 402 permit, CWA section 401 certification) or federal, state, tribal, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are **not** eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks.
- Funds cannot be used for implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs.
- Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed for the purposes of only treating wastewater or stormwater.
- Purchase of any type of equipment including vehicles, boats, motor homes office furniture valued at \$5,000 or more is not eligible for funding.
- Lease of a vehicle(s) may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the proposal narrative.
- Funds cannot be used for activities to implement a wetlands program, for fundraising, or for gifts.
- Projects must be performed entirely within the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories (i.e., Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa).

#### **IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

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

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), the applicant must contact [OGDWaivers@epa.gov](mailto: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 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 [Grants.gov](http://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 [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then "Apply for Grants" from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit Adobe Reader Compatibility Information on Grants.gov.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). Go to [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OW-OWOW-16-02, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.462), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). To find the synopsis page, go to [Grants.gov](http://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.

**Application Submission Deadline:** Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) no later than **June 23, 2016**. 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. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IV.C. 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 Myra Price at (202) 566-1225. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

### **Technical Issues with Submission**

1. Once the application package has been completed, the "Submit" button should be enabled. If the "Submit" button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who

are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced or a revised application needs to be submitted.

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear. **Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation. The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.**

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

Note: Grants.gov issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to Myra Price with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Myra Price at 202-566-1225. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [www.Sam.gov](https://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 [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Myra Price at 202-566-1225.

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 Myra Price at [price.myra@epa.gov](mailto:price.myra@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 Myra Price 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.** All proposal packages must include the following three documents described below:

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

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the Standard Form 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.

**2. SF 424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs**

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF 424A. 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 (personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the 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 Workplan**

The proposal workplan, Sections A-E below, must be limited to no more than ten (10) single-spaced typewritten 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper) (**except** for documents specifically excluded from the page limit 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 workplan. Additional pages beyond the 10 page single-spaced page limit will not be considered. If a double-spaced proposal workplan is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 10 single-spaced (20 page double-spaced) page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials (such as letters of support from potential partners and annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit for the proposal workplan. Any documentation pertaining to Quality Assurance/Quality Control and Invasive Species Control is also not included in the page limit for the proposal workplan.

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

**A. Cover Page including:**

- a. Name of applicant;
- b. Project title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less);
- c. List of all potential partners associated with the project;
- d. Indicate the core element(s) addressed in the proposal (*e.g., Monitoring and Assessment; Voluntary Restoration and Protection; Regulatory Approaches; and/or Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*);
- e. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
- f. Geographic location (indicate if the project is nationwide or indicate the states/tribes that are involved and/or otherwise benefited by the project and in which EPA Regions they are located);

- g. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested, the non-federal cost share/match, and the total project cost); and
- h. Abstract/project summary (the abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the proposal. It should also include a listing of the main tasks to be accomplished, and a description of the final product(s). The entire abstract should be 250 words or less).

**B. Project Description** containing:

- a. National Priority Area: Describe the approach for addressing the National Priority Area in Section I.B of this announcement. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project elements. Outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals. If travel assistance is to be provided for non-federal attendees at training sessions, work group meetings, or workshops, 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 - List 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.D of this announcement);
  - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) – List the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project, and describe an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.D of this announcement); and
  - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements that will be accomplished as a result of the project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of workplan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).
- c. Geographic Location: Describe how the project is nationwide or how it involves and/or otherwise benefits at least one state/tribe in at least two or more EPA Regions.
- d. 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. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant. Include an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.
- e. Partnerships: Describe the appropriate and necessary partnerships (agencies/organizations) that you will partner with to successfully conduct the project. Include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. Describe how these partnerships will contribute to the success of the project. If you choose to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants), please refer to the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses> before doing so as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless you select them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Letters of support from potential partners are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the proposal workplan. If appropriate, describe how having no partners is the

best approach and how project outputs and outcomes will be accomplished successfully without partners.

- f. **Transfer of Results:** Provide a brief description of how the applicant will actively transfer the results, methods, and/or effective strategies to state, tribal, local governmental agencies, and/or other interested stakeholders to better build their wetland programs. Letters of support from potential partners especially those that will make use of the project's results are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the proposal workplan. Examples of ways to actively transfer results can be found in Section I.B.
- g. **Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)** (not counted in page limit for the proposal workplan): 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 project budget.
- h. **Invasive Species Control** (not counted in page limit for the proposal workplan): If applicable, describe how you will ensure that your project does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. Explain how you would respond if an invasive species problem occurs in relation to your project. (See Section VIII.D, INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL, of this announcement for additional information).

**C. Detailed Budget Narrative** – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/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. If applicable, the budget narrative for the “other” cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-federal personnel other than applicant staff. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings throughout the proposed project period in the “travel” cost category. Total costs must include separate breakdowns for federal and cost share/matching (non-federal) components. For each cost category, indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by EPA and what portion of the cost will be covered by the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match as required in Section III.B. Letters of support from partners providing cost share/match are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the proposal workplan. Describe each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine cost-effectiveness, reasonableness and allowability of costs, and value of in-kind contributions.

**D. Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/ Qualifications**

- 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 for the proposal workplan).
- 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.

- E. 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 workplan 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 must be submitted by **11:59 P.M. EDT June 23, 2016**. 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 <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing 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. PROPOSAL 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.

1) National Priority Area (25 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality of the approach to addressing the National Priority Area described in Section I.B. of this announcement. (25 points)
2) Environmental Results and Measuring Progress (20 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion: 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 of working with partners achieving a net increase in wetland acres. (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.D of this announcement). (10 points)
3) Milestone Schedule/Detailed Budget (15 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates each of the following sub-criteria: 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. (10 points) B. The reasonableness and cost-effectiveness of all costs in the budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. Total costs must include both federal and cost share/matching (non-federal) components. (5 points)
4) Project Partnerships (10 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project including whether they have provided a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks, and how these partnerships will contribute to the success of the project. If no partners will be used in project performance you will be evaluated based on how you demonstrate how project outputs and outcomes will be accomplished successfully without partners. (10 points)
5) Transfer of Results (10 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well it demonstrates 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 wetland programs. (10 points)

<p>6) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/Qualifications (10 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 applicant's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their infrastructure as it relates to the ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points)</li> <li>B. Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points).</li> </ul>
<p>7) Past Performance (10 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 their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded 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 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). (3 points)</li> <li>B. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded 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 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (3 points)</li> <li>C. Extent and quality to which they documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g. outcomes and outputs) under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed in the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented why not. (4 points)</li> </ul> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under A., B., and C. above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and/or prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history must indicate that in the proposal and they will receive a neutral score for the factor (i.e., 1.5 points for subcriterion A., 1.5 points for subcriterion B., and 2 points for subcriterion C.).</p> <p>Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factor</p>

	(i.e., 0 points for subcriterion A., 0 points for subcriterion B., and 0 points for subcriterion C.
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**B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

All proposals received by EPA 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 panel(s) comprised of EPA staff will review the eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. A ranking list will be developed based on the panel evaluations. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes the final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score/ranking and may also take into account geographical distribution of funds, diversity of projects, program priorities, and availability of funds.

**C. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR APPLICANTS INCORPORATED INTO THE SOLICITATION:**

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found on the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#) page. These, and the other provisions that can be found on this page, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

**VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**A. AWARD NOTICES**

Following EPA’s evaluation of the proposals, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance, nor is it a guarantee that the award will be made. The official notification of an award will be made by Grants and Interagency Agreements Management Division. 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.

Applicants are cautioned that only an EPA Award Official is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to the applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA Award Official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the assistance agreement can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of the assistance agreement can take up to 90 days or longer.

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 §35.115 of 40 CFR.
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted at the following website address <https://ofmpub.epa.gov/apex/grts/f?p=101:101:8604647356901::NO>. Information about this announcement can be found <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>. Deadline extensions or other modifications, if any, will be posted on this website and <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>.

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

## **C. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

The general award and administration process for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 2 CFR 200 and 1500, as applicable. A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in cooperative agreements will be included in the final assistance agreement.

## **D. DISPUTE PROCEDURES**

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 <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-competition-dispute-resolution-procedures>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII, AGENCY CONTACT of the announcement.

## **E. 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 quarterly 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 200 and 1500, and 40 CFR Part 45, as appropriate. 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, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the meetings.

## **VII. AGENCY CONTACT**

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 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 a final 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 - **June 10, 2016**, and written responses will be posted on EPA Wetland Division's website at <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>.

### **Agency Contact**

Myra Price

E-mail: [price.myra@epa.gov](mailto:price.myra@epa.gov)

## **VIII. OTHER INFORMATION**

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

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements apply to these grants (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. Successful 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. See Section VII, AGENCY CONTACTS 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 <https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/storage-and-retrieval-and-water-quality-exchange>.

### **B. DATA SHARING**

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.

### **C. WETLANDS MAPPING STANDARD**

A "National Wetland Mapping Standard" has recently been developed by a work group of the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC). This work group has provided a national standard for "wetland mapping" which must be used in all "wetland mapping" projects that are funded through the federal government. Non-federally funded "wetland mapping" projects are encouraged to comply with the standard. Wetlands mapped using the standard can be uploaded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) database to refine the existing wetland data. The National Wetland Mapping Standard can be found at: [http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC-standards-projects/wetlands-mapping/FinalDraft\\_FGDC\\_WetlandsMappingStandard\\_2009-01.pdf](http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC-standards-projects/wetlands-mapping/FinalDraft_FGDC_WetlandsMappingStandard_2009-01.pdf). If your project is for another intended purpose other than "wetland mapping" but a map will be developed you may not need to meet the National Wetland Mapping Standard. Please contact the USFWS at <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/contributed-Data.html> or [Wetlands\\_Team@fws.gov](mailto:Wetlands_Team@fws.gov) to determine if you will need to meet the standard and how you will comply with the standard if necessary.

### **D. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL**

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to insure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.