**General**

- **What are the benefits of being a TRI University Challenge partner?**
  The TRI University Challenge offers students practical experience working on environmental issues with EPA, and gives faculty the opportunity to advance their research applications. TRI University Challenge projects can also serve as a capstone project for students.

  As a partner, you will receive direct support from EPA TRI staff experts to answer questions and assist you with TRI tools and approaches to data analysis. Additionally, partners will receive national recognition and promotion through the TRI University Challenge website and speaking opportunities at conferences and events.

- **How will EPA typically collaborate with partners on a project?**
  Staff from EPA’s TRI Program will tailor the types of interaction based on project proposals, providing the support needed to successfully complete each project. Examples of collaboration include bi-weekly phone calls and webinars with involved students and staff, regular email contact, and status updates to proactively address any issues. In certain instances, EPA is also available to provide technical support to help partners use available TRI tools, facilitate connections that strengthen project outcomes, or direct partners to other important data sources and opportunities.

- **Do I need to have a strong scientific background to get involved?**
  The TRI University Challenge aims to make scientific data more understandable to the public, a goal that is supported by many types of skills and knowledge sets. You may be able to contribute to non-scientific aspects of a project, such as offering creative insights into how to effectively engage communities.

  We encourage interested parties to design a proposal that applies your unique skills and interests to the key project theme: Using chemical release and pollution prevention data to promote collaboration among manufacturers, communities, and government. There are
a number of opportunities to apply creative communication skills or analytical skills. Example project ideas include:

- Develop specific products that can be used by industry and community stakeholders to increase awareness and use of TRI data, and develop a plan for distribution of the products
- Produce a replicable strategy and tools (e.g., Good Neighbor Agreements) for engaging community members and local TRI facilities in a productive dialogue
- Demonstrate the benefits of multi-stakeholder collaboration for reducing the use and releases of toxic chemicals as measured by TRI
- Bring together data from TRI and other data sources to show trends in environmental or human health outcomes in communities
- Identify pollution prevention successes achieved by facilities, and develop strategies for sharing such successes with communities and other facilities

- **What funding is available for partner projects?**
  Although we don’t have any direct funding for selected projects, there are a number of resources, including both EPA and non-EPA grants, that TRI staff can direct you to. Applicants are also encouraged to reach out to their communities or other organizations for additional financial support, if needed. If funding is required and unavailable, EPA staff may be able to help project teams adapt their approach to allow the project to be successful with limited funds.

- **Is all TRI data public?**
  Yes, all TRI resources are public information and can be cited in any published literature.

**Application Process**

- **Who can submit a project proposal and apply to be a TRI University Challenge partner?** Anyone affiliated with an accredited college or university in the United States, Canada or Mexico can submit a proposal. This includes undergraduate/graduate students, Ph.D. candidates, and academic faculty and researchers. An applicant must be a current student or faculty member to be eligible. Proposals must be written in English.
• **How can I apply?**
  To apply, complete the Partner Application Form and send your completed application to the TRI University Challenge at briere.caitlin@epa.gov by midnight on April 7, 2017. Applications should address all stages of the proposed project, from the approach you will take, to the specific timeline, and completion of the project.

• **How will the project proposals be reviewed?**
  A review panel of EPA staff will individually assess and assign scores for each application based on the evaluation criteria. After the scoring process, the review panel will meet to reach a consensus on the selected proposals. The evaluation criteria include: clarity and effectiveness of proposed approach (40%), project outcomes (40%), and partner capabilities (20%). Additional criteria details are available on the TRI University Challenge website: [http://www.epa.gov/tri/university/](http://www.epa.gov/tri/university/).

• **How many project proposals will be accepted from each EPA region?**
  The EPA is divided into 10 regions. Although geographic diversity in proposals is helpful because environmental data differs greatly by location, there is no fixed number of applications that must be selected from each region. The top evaluation criterion will be the quality of the project proposal.

• **How many project proposals will be selected overall?**
  EPA will select 2-4 proposals for the 2017 TRI University Challenge.

• **When will I find out if my proposal has been selected?**
  EPA will notify applicants of proposal decisions in May of 2017.

• **If my proposal is selected, when will my project begin?**
  Selected projects will be launched at the beginning of the fall semester of 2017, starting in August or September.