

SOUTHEAST NEW ENGLAND PROGRAM

2017 Request for Applications

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Region 1

Funding Opportunity Title: Coastal Watershed Restoration Grant Program for the Southeast New England Program (SNEP)

Announcement Type: Request for Applications (RFA)

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R1-SNEP-2017

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.129

Important Dates

RFA posted in Grants.gov	April 14, 2017
Information Webinar	May 9, 2017 2:00 – 3:30 (see Section VII and http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp for details)
Closing date and application deadline	June 12, 2017 is the closing date for application packages to be submitted in order to be considered for funding. Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) by 11:59 pm EDT .
Applicant notification	July 17, 2017: EPA expects to notify the selected applicant.
Award of funds	September 22, 2017: EPA expects to award funds.

Dates: Applications must be received by electronic submission through Grants.gov on or before **11:59 P.M. EDT June 12, 2017**. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in **Section VII** by **May 29, 2017**. EPA will post written responses on EPA’s website at: <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp>. Following evaluation of applications, EPA will notify all applicants regarding their status.

Note to Applicants: If the applicant names subawardees/sub-grantees and/or contractor(s) in their proposal to assist with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm.

Also Note: Funding under this announcement is currently authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, and Further Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act, 2017. The continuing resolution funding government operations expires April 28, 2017. Accordingly, this funding announcement is anticipatory in nature with the expectation of Fiscal Year 2017 funding. While EPA expects funding to become available, applicants should be aware that if appropriations do not become available or significant changes are made to EPA’s funding authority, EPA may be required to modify or cancel this announcement and determine whether and how to proceed. EPA expressly reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement or to incrementally fund a selected award subject to the availability of funding or other considerations.

For purposes of this RFA:

- The “applicant” refers to the organization submitting an application.
- “Grant Program” refers to the Coastal Watershed Restoration Grant Program for the Southeast New England Program
- “SNEP” refers to the Southeast New England Program. The term “SNEP geographic boundaries” refers to the south-facing coastal watersheds between Westerly, Rhode Island and Chatham, Massachusetts, the watersheds of the Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay National Estuary Programs (NEPs), and offshore islands of Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, Elizabeth Islands (Town of Gosnold, MA), and Block Island (Town of New Shoreham, RI). Projects must occur within this geographic area to be eligible to be considered for funding. A high-resolution map of the SNEP area is found in Appendix A and at <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp/background-information-southeast-new-england-coastal-watershed-restoration-program>.

- The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative, but must be measurable over the term of the grant funding period. As an example, an output for a Phragmites removal project would be the removal of Phragmites from a specific number of acres.
- The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will be achieved by carrying out an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, must be quantitative, and may not necessarily be achievable within a grant funding period. As an example, an outcome for a Phragmites removal project would be a diversified, more natural ecosystem that sustains a wide variety of native species.

SUMMARY

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible entities (see **Section III.A**) under this announcement to support goals of the SNEP for coastal watershed restoration. SNEP is a geographically-based program serving as a collaborative framework for advancing ecosystem resiliency, protecting and restoring water quality, habitat, and ecosystem function, and developing and applying innovative policy, science, and technology to environmental management in southeast coastal New England. These broad goals were informed by input from members of a Steering Committee that includes the States of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, key environmental and watershed organizations, local tribes, and other Federal agencies. Objectives under these goals include improving water quality to reduce the impact of nutrients on water quality and aquatic life; restoring physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function; and aligning restoration and management efforts on a regional scale to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency. This RFA reflects those objectives and focuses primarily on reducing the impacts of nutrients, especially nitrogen, on aquatic life and coastal ecosystems, restoring physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function, and measuring, monitoring, and reporting change in condition and the effectiveness of actions. Under this focus, EPA intends to fund a selected applicant to manage a competitive subaward grant program to support projects that build capacity to implement strategic protection and restoration of coastal ecosystems and their watersheds, including associated water quality and aquatic habitats, in southeast New England.

This RFA sets forth a competitive process to solicit and select an eligible organization to administer the SNEP subaward grant program under one assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement. Eligible applicants may include existing partnerships of organizations, partnerships of organizations formally created in response to this RFA, and individual organizations. EPA seeks applicants that will administer a grant program to address the SNEP priorities of (1) reducing the impacts of nutrients, especially nitrogen, on aquatic life and coastal ecosystems, (2) restoring physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function; and (3) measuring, monitoring, and reporting change in condition and the effectiveness of actions through projects and partnerships implemented by tribal, state, and local government agencies; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); academic institutions; technology developers; scientists; and other eligible groups.

For the purposes of this program, a partnership is an entity linked with or in a collaborative arrangement with other groups or organizations having similar goals for the restoration of southeast coastal New England. The selected recipient will manage the assistance agreement to bring together partners and to provide subawards to eligible subawardees.

Specifically, EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to:

- Administer the subaward grant program, including: preparing and issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) responsive to SNEP priorities; establishing review criteria and expert panels for evaluating and selecting subawardee proposals; establishing guidelines for the program; and making and overseeing subawards to support SNEP coastal watershed restoration goals as described in **Section I.A** and **Section I.B** of this announcement;
- Provide technical support to subawardees by coordinating outreach, training, information resources, and peer-to-peer tech transfer, including convening at least one annual regional meeting for subawardees to learn from each other;
- Qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report the outputs and outcomes of the environmental results of the SNEP projects accomplished through the subawards;

- Further SNEP priorities through partnerships, networking, and facilitating subawardees to develop and commit to future partnering and implementation efforts;
- Communicate, transfer, and expand the successes of the subaward projects and the SNEP ecosystem-based approach by conducting outreach through traditional and new media.
- Dispense monies to subaward recipients in a timely manner to reduce unliquidated obligations and as required by applicable grant regulations; and
- Ensure that subaward activities align with the SNEP priorities identified in this RFA.

The competitive award must be SNEP-region in scale¹ and support projects that address common priorities within the SNEP boundaries. Funding provided under this announcement supports Goal 2 of the Fiscal Year 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan - Protecting America's Waters: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems².

Eligible applicants under this RFA are tribal, state, regional, and local governments; institutes of higher education; nonprofit institutions and organizations; intertribal consortia; and interstate agencies.³ Applicants must have the authority and ability to work in all SNEP state, regional, and local jurisdictions, and be capable of undertaking activities that advance SNEP priorities.

EPA expects the total estimated funding available for awards under this competitive opportunity will be up to **\$5 million for FY2017, and up to a total of approximately \$12 million over three years through FY2020**. The total estimated funding for three years is approximately \$12 million. EPA expects to fund one cooperative agreement under this RFA for a single entity to coordinate and manage the grant process contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. However, EPA expressly reserves the right to make no award or to incrementally fund a selected one.

An incrementally funded award will be subject to the availability of funding, future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. EPA requires the applicant to provide a minimum 25% match of the total Federal request (see **Section III.B** for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match requirement).

Current authorization for SNEP funding is contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 and the Further Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act, 2017, which give EPA the authority to award grants and cooperative agreements to carry out SNEP, including planning, research, monitoring, outreach, and implementation projects within the SNEP geographic area. The Further Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act, 2017, expires on April 28, 2017. As a result, applicants should be aware that if appropriations do not become available or significant changes are made to EPA's funding authority after this date, EPA may be required to modify or cancel this announcement and determine whether and how to proceed.

Other Application Information: For the applicant's convenience, EPA has created an RFA web page at <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp> to provide information relating to the RFA process as well as a link to frequently asked questions (FAQs). EPA encourages all applicants to sign up for SNEP's mailing list by sending an email to SEcoastalNE@epa.gov requesting to be placed on the list to receive any updates regarding this RFA, the review process, and/or selections.

FUNDING/AWARDS: The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is up to \$12 million over three years. We anticipate awarding a single cooperative agreement from this announcement, subject to availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations.

CONTENTS BY SECTION

I. Funding Opportunity Description

II. Award Information

III. Eligibility Information

IV. Application and Submission Information

V. Application Review Information

¹ See Appendix A for map of SNEP geographic boundaries and program description

² EPA's Strategic Plan is available at <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

³ See **Section III. A** for definitions of eligible and ineligible entities

VI. Award Administration Information

VII. Agency Contacts

VIII. Other Information (Appendices)

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

I.A. Background

The objective of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) is to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters." Despite continuing progress in achieving these goals, coastal ecosystems are recognized as particularly vulnerable to upstream pollution sources, fragmented management, and the impacts of stressors such as extreme weather and sea-level rise. The coastal watersheds of southeast New England are prime examples of this vulnerability. The economy and community health of this region are directly tied to its unique ecological systems. These systems are currently impaired by excessive nutrients from wastewater, septic systems, and other land-based sources, and face future threats to resiliency from increasing ecological stressors and shifting socio-economic patterns. Traditionally, agencies and organizations have sought to address these problems independently, separated by jurisdictions, institutional identities, and issues in reconciling different uses and priorities.

These factors call for a more holistic approach to protecting aquatic ecosystems. SNEP's focus on the region's urgent common issues offers an opportunity to connect these jurisdictions, institutions, and programs. SNEP is a geographically-based program intended to serve as a collaborative framework for advancing ecosystem resiliency, protecting and restoring water quality, habitat, and ecosystem function, and developing and applying innovative policy, science, and technology to environmental management in southeast coastal New England. A critical aspect of this framework is the integration of physical processes, water quality, and critical habitat at a regional, watershed, and/or landscape scale. This ecosystem-based approach increases the effectiveness of regional restoration efforts throughout the SNEP region to enhance the impact and scale of local efforts and limit duplication. It enables sharing of financial and management resources, and builds sustainable frameworks and partnerships needed to invest in wise restoration and proactive measures over the long-term.

SNEP's role as a partnership facilitator among government and non-governmental organizations is central to its mission to empower collective action that not only improves water quality and restores habitat, but also sustains coastal ecosystem services and functions that promote important community values for health and safety, resilient economies, and protected uses.

I.B. Grant Program Objectives

Coastal ecosystems are dynamic, interconnected in the landscape through hydrological, biological, and land-based processes, and they must be protected as systems in order to maintain their integrity and the benefits they provide; among waterbodies, coastal ecosystems are even further challenged by the complexity and variability of their underlying natural regimes. Understanding and maintaining system functions are also important for withstanding stressors such as extreme weather impacts, sea-level rise, habitat loss, degraded riparian and flood plain services, urbanization, and loss of connectivity corridors for key species. Management approaches at multiple scales are critical to successfully protecting and restoring watershed and ecosystem functions and services. Finally, prioritization based on vulnerability and/or other factors is necessary given limited resources. This RFA focuses on SNEP's priority to (1) reduce the impacts of nutrients, especially nitrogen, on aquatic life and coastal ecosystems, (2) restore physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function, including those that control nutrient processes, and (3) measure, monitor, and report on changes in condition and effectiveness of actions.

For purposes of this RFA, EPA considers strategic protection and restoration to be ecosystem-scale multi-stakeholder strategies, plans, or actions implemented by an entity or organization capable of proactive protection and targeted enhancement or improvement within an ecosystem-based approach.

Under this approach, EPA intends to fund a selected applicant to manage a competitive subaward grant program that captures the SNEP strategic restoration priorities of (1) reducing the impacts of nutrients on aquatic life and coastal ecosystems; (2) restoring physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function, including those that control nutrient processes; and (3) measuring, monitoring, and reporting change in condition and the effectiveness of

actions. Applicants should demonstrate their ability and describe their approach to manage a competitive SNEP subawards program that addresses these priorities.

EPA expects to award up to \$12 million in total over three years as a cooperative agreement under this RFA for a single entity to coordinate and manage the subaward program, contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. However, EPA expressly reserves the right to make no award or to incrementally fund an award funded under this announcement. An incrementally funded award will be subject to the availability of funding, future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. EPA requires that the applicant provide a minimum 25 percent match of the total federal request (see **Section III.B** for information on the minimum 25 percent non-federal cost share/match requirement). EPA expects funding for each subaward to be up to \$750,000; however, applicants may justify a different range as part of their application narrative. Subawards funded under the cooperative agreement must be completed prior to the end of the cooperative agreement project period.

Activities to be performed by the recipient include, but are not limited to:

- Administering the subaward grant program, including preparing and issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) responsive to the priorities listed above, establishing review criteria and expert panels for evaluating and selecting subawardee proposals, establishing guidelines for the program, and making and overseeing subawards to support coastal watershed restoration goals as described in **Section I.A** and **Section I.B** of this announcement;
- Providing technical support to subawardees by coordinating outreach, training, information resources, and peer-to-peer tech transfer, including convening at least one annual regional meeting for subawardees to learn from each other;
- Qualitatively and quantitatively measuring and reporting the outputs and outcomes of the environmental results of the SNEP projects accomplished through the subawards;
- Furthering SNEP priorities through partnerships, networking, and facilitating subawardees to develop and commit to future partnering and implementation efforts;
- Communicating, transferring, and expanding the successes of the subaward projects and the SNEP ecosystem-based approach by conducting outreach through traditional and new media.
- Dispensing monies to subaward recipients in a timely manner to reduce unliquidated obligations and as required by applicable grant regulations; and
- Ensuring that subaward activities align with SNEP priorities identified in this RFA.

The above are examples of the types of activities expected of the applicant. In addition to considering these examples, applicants may also describe alternative approaches for managing and issuing subawards. For several example subaward activities, see **Appendix D**.

At present, the statutory authority for this action is the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 and the Further Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act, 2017, which currently authorize EPA to award grants and cooperative agreements to carry out SNEP, including planning, research, monitoring, outreach, and implementation projects within the SNEP geographic area. Applicants should be aware that if appropriations do not become available or significant changes are made to EPA's funding authority, EPA may be required to modify or cancel this announcement and determine whether and how to proceed. EPA expressly reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement or to incrementally fund a selected award subject to the availability of funding or other considerations.

I.C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs, and Performance Measures

Under Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. See EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements (http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-03/documents/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf).

Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. All applications must support progress towards EPA's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan Goal 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”⁴, and towards Strategic Measures (Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis and Improve Coastal and Ocean Waters) (<http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget>).

Outputs

The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Number and list of subaward recipients (list must be in easy to use and read formatted spreadsheets or other similar electronic tool);
- Use of online grant management tools (e.g., tools for subaward applicants to apply; for review teams to read and rank subaward applicants);
- Partnerships formed or strengthened that contribute to measurably reduced nutrient impacts and improved or restored aquatic ecosystems;
- Numbers of acres and/or miles of restoration and conservation practices implemented that preserve or restore connectivity and/or support natural ecosystem and watershed processes;
- Number of restoration, watershed, and/or land use plans designed, developed, or implemented;
- Number of plans for testing and implementing approaches, and for sharing and adopting successful outcomes, lessons learned, technologies developed, approaches gleaned, and best practices employed from the activities’ projects;
- Development of databases of regional data such as precipitation, streamflow and volume, nutrient concentrations and discharge information, and land-use nutrient loadings to enable targeted action;
- Implementation of monitoring coverage, practices, and indicators focused on expanding capacity to measure, monitor, and report changes in impacts and aquatic ecosystem condition;
- Criteria and methods for evaluating and tracking success and sustainability of actions implemented through projects.

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

Outcomes

The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of potential outcomes under activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Creation of sustainable partnerships and/or other management collaboratives to operate across the SNEP region;
- Changes made to regulations, codes, and/or ordinances to promote watershed-based management;
- Implementation of innovative watershed-based nutrient reduction strategies;
- Deployment of shared monitoring protocols, data, and reporting networks;
- Improved capacity among state and local governments to finance, implement, and monitor regionally scaled habitat projects;
- Improved collective knowledge about how the physical processes of SNEP watersheds have improved, resulting in reduction in the amount of nutrients discharged in SNEP watersheds and an improvement in the ecosystem services and functions of SNEP watersheds;
- Recovery of healthy aquatic life in nearby surface waters based on before- and after-project measurements; and
- Cost savings resulting from project implementation

⁴ EPA’s Strategic Plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

Performance Measures. Applicants should also develop performance measures expected to be achieved through management of the SNEP grant program and describe them in the application. These performance measures will offer insights into long-term progress, will be the mechanism to track progress on successful process and outcome strategies, and will provide the basis for lessons to inform future recipients.

Applicants should consider the following questions when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the projects funded will achieve?
- How will progress be measured in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will their proposed approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

II. AWARD INFORMATION

II. A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

EPA plans to award one cooperative agreement for activities under this RFA and expects the total estimated funding available for awards under this competitive opportunity will be up to **\$5 million for FY2017, and up to a total of approximately \$12 million over three years through FY2019.** The total estimated funding for three years is approximately \$12 million. The total estimated funding for three years is approximately \$12 million.

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

A minimum cost share/match of 25 percent of the federal request is required under this RFA (see **Section III.B** for more information on the minimum non-federal cost share/match requirement).

II.B. Award Type

EPA has determined that a cooperative agreement is the appropriate funding vehicle for this project. Cooperative agreements are used under circumstances where substantial involvement is anticipated between EPA and the recipient during performance of the activity(ies). Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; review of proposed procurements (in accordance with 2 CFR 200.318(i)); review of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

For these projects, federal involvement would typically be in an advisory capacity. This involvement could include participation in grantee review panels and workshop/forum planning committees as well as involvement in communication and data sharing efforts. EPA will not make final subaward decisions or selections; the grantee will make the final subaward selections and administer the subawards. All of the work conducted under funded subawards is to support efforts to restore the SNEP ecosystem.

Specifically, EPA expects to be substantially involved by:

- Monitoring performance to verify the results proposed in applicant's application;
- Collaborating during performance of the scope of work;
- Reviewing any proposed procurements and subawards in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317, 200.318, 200.330, and 200.331;
- Approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- Reviewing and commenting on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (applicants make final decisions on the content of reports).

EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process with the selected applicant.

II.C. Partial Funding

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

II.D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreements is up to 5 years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the awards resulting from this RFA is **October 1, 2017**. In order to ensure timely closeout and reporting of results, please note that projects funded under subawards from this award must be completed no later than six months before the end of the project period.

II.E. Pre-Award Costs

Recipients may incur otherwise eligible and allowable pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award at their own risk without prior approval of EPA's award official. Pre-award costs must comply with 2 CFR 200.308. If EPA determines that the requested pre-award costs comply with the relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Principles (2 CFR Part 225 for government entities, 2 CFR Part 220 for educational institutions, and 2 CFR Part 230 for non-profit organizations), and that the costs are justified as allocable to the project, then these costs may be included as allowable expenditures at the time that the assistance award document is prepared. However, if for any reason EPA does not fund the proposal or the amount of the award is less than the applicant anticipated, then EPA is under no obligation to reimburse the applicant for these costs incurred. Thus, applicants incur pre-award costs at their own risk. Costs incurred more than 90 days prior to award require the approval of EPA Region 1's grant official.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

III. A. Eligible Applicants

Assistance under SNEP is available to state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments; institutions of higher education; nonprofit institutions and organizations; intertribal consortia; and interstate agencies. Applicants must have the authority and ability to work in all SNEP state, local, and regional jurisdictions and be capable of undertaking activities that advance SNEP priorities, including managing potentially complex fiscal and administrative requirements. Private businesses, federal agencies, and individuals are not eligible to apply; however, EPA encourages them to work in partnership with eligible applicants on projects. Applicants are not limited to the geographic area of southeastern coastal New England, but their projects *must be carried out within the SNEP geographic region*; EPA encourages applicants to have at least one local partner from within the SNEP geographic area. Applications must be SNEP-region in scale (see map in **Appendix A** for a map of the SNEP region) and support projects that address SNEP priorities within the SNEP boundaries.

The geographic area of the southeast New England Region includes south-facing coastal watersheds between Westerly, Rhode Island to Chatham, Massachusetts, the watersheds of the Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay National Estuary Programs (NEPs), and off-shore islands of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, Elizabeth Islands (Town of Gosnold, MA), and Block Island (Town of New Shoreham, RI). Subaward projects must take place within this geographic area to be eligible for consideration of funding. A high resolution map of the SNEP area is provided at <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp/background-information-southeast-new-england-coastal-watershed-restoration-program> and in **Appendix A**.

For-profit organizations are not an eligible entity for this funding opportunity. Additionally, 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.

III. B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirements

All applicants must demonstrate that they can contribute a minimum non-federal cost share/match of 25 percent of the federal request.

Match/cost shares can be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, salaries or other verifiable costs and must be carefully documented. Involvement from foundations, watershed groups, private sector, eligible governmental, as well as non-conventional partners can help with the match. The match/cost share must be for allowable project costs under the SNEP funding authority described in sub-section I.E, and any restrictions on the use of grant funds also apply to the use of cost share/matching funds. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. All funds are subject to federal audit. Applicants that do not describe how they will meet the minimum match/cost share requirement in their submission will not be considered for funding. Other federal grants may not be used as cost shares/matches without specific statutory authority. Regulations governing match/cost share requirements are at 2 CFR 200.306.

To calculate the minimum match under this RFA, divide the total federal request by four using the following formula:

$$\text{Total Federal Funds Requested (\$) divided by four (4) = minimum cost share/match (\$).}$$

For example, if the applicant is requesting \$3,750,000, they must be able to provide \$937,500 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match. The federal funds plus the match is the total project cost.

III. C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Only proposals from eligible entities (see **Section III.A** above) that meet the following threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the criteria in **Section V.B**. Applicants must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified in writing within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

- Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in **Section IV** of this announcement or else they will be rejected. Note that if the application exceeds the page limitation stated in **Appendix C**, EPA will not review the excess pages and the information they contain will not be factored into the evaluation.
- Applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov as stated in **Section IV** of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed as explained in **Section IV**) on or before the application submission deadline published in **Section IV** of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in **Section IV** of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant System for Award Management (SAM) system issues (found at SAM.gov). An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with the designated contact identified in **Section VII** as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in the application not being reviewed.
- Applications must support EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2, 'Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems'. (See **Section I.C**)
- Applications must show how the cost-share requirements of **Section III.B** will be met
- If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGDwaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

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

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

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

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Organization Name and DUNS
- Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
- Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through 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, 2016, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2016). 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, 2016 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2017, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2017.

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.

IV.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 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 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. Go to Grants.gov and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R1-SNEP-2017, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.129), in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

Please note that Grants.gov is strongly encouraging users to sign up for and use their “Workspace” feature when applying for opportunities. Grants.gov will be phasing out the “legacy” application process, so EPA recommends that all applicants begin using Workspace as soon as possible so they are prepared when the “legacy” application process is no longer available.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than June 12, 2017. 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. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. Grants.gov Lobbying Form
5. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54

6. EPA Form 4700-4 – Preaward Compliance Review Report

7. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in **Appendix C** of this announcement

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 Karen Simpson, at (617) 918-1672. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

IV.C. Technical Issues With Submission

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

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear.

Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation. The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.

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

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 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 SECoastalNE@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Karen Simpson at (617) 918-1672. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call 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 Karen Simpson at (617) 918-1672.

b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, and you have already attempted to resolve the issue by contacting Grants.gov, send an email message to SECoastalNE@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.

c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal and it is too late to reapply, promptly send an email to SECoastalNE@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or via email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

IV. D. Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. EPA implemented the Executive Order in 40 CFR Part 29. EPA may require applicants selected for funding to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review as provided at 40 CFR 29.7(a) and 40 CFR 29.8(a)(2). The SPOC list can be found at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_s poc/ EPA may require successful applicants from states that do not have a SPOC to provide a copy of their application for review to directly affected state, area-wide, regional and local government entities as provided at 40 CFR 29.7(b) and 40 CFR 29.8(a)(2). These reviews are not required before submitting an application.

IV. E. Allowable Costs

EPA assistance agreement funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the cooperative agreement and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Federal funds may not be used for cost sharing for other federal grants (except where authorized by statute), lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Principles (2 CFR Part 225 for government entities, 2 CFR Part 220 for educational institutions, and 2 CFR Part 230 for nonprofit organizations). During the grant negotiation, any ineligible costs outlined in the proposal (i.e. lobbying activities) will be excluded in the final grant award.

IV. F. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Applicants must submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements. In evaluating this evaluation criteria, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). In addition, applicants must provide information on their organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project and their staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

IV. G. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews applications for threshold eligibility as described in **Section III**, eligible applications will be reviewed by a team of professionals from EPA with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of SNEP. All reviewers will sign a conflict of interest statement indicating there is no real or perceived conflict.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 125 points

Criteria	Points
<p>1. Subaward Program Description: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on how well the application demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a competitive subaward grant program designed to timely and successfully support and achieve the strategic restoration priorities identified in this RFA in Section- I.B (15 points) b. the applicant has the skill, experience, and resources to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. seek projects in the planned competition that prevent further degradation of SNEP watersheds; (5 points) ii. evaluate and select projects that address the objectives of (1) reducing the impacts of nutrients, especially nitrogen, on aquatic life and coastal ecosystems, (2) restoring physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function, including those that control nutrient processes, and (3) measuring, monitoring, and reporting on changes in condition and the effectiveness of actions; and (10 points) iii. manage subaward recipients to achieve the objectives of the program described in Sections I.B and I.C of the announcement (5 points) c. familiarity with institutional and historical conditions, including impediments to collaboration and regional approaches, and with local environmental challenges and ecosystem conditions within the SNEP region. (10 points) 	45
<p>2. Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the applicant based on their programmatic capability to successfully perform the proposed activity taking into account the applicant's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Past performance in successfully completing federal- and non-federally-funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements, but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years (applicant should include no more than five, preferably EPA agreements). Successful completion of federally-funded assistance agreements also includes the applicant organization's history of meeting reporting requirements and submission of acceptable final technical reports under those agreements; (5 points) b. Extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress in achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federal agency assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not; (5 points) c. Organizational experience and staff expertise, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Relevant staff technical expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain experienced and qualified staff, to successfully achieve the environmental goals for their proposed application; and (5 points) ii. Relevant organizational and administrative capacity, experiences, travel capabilities (e.g., ability to conduct site visits, onsite audits of subawardees, and other needed oversight to successfully administer the tasks of executing and managing the subaward program), and technical and outreach expertise to accomplish the proposed plan of work successfully. (5 points) 	20

<p><i>Note: In evaluating applicants under items a. and b. of these criteria, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g. to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance, they must indicate this in the proposal and will receive a neutral score for these subfactors. A neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, they will receive a score of zero for these subfactors.</i></p>	
<p>3. Cost-effectiveness: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application is cost-effective, considering the following factors: organizational overhead; indirect costs; subaward costs versus anticipated results of projects; prudent cost allocations over the life of the award; organizational and partner resources (if any) brought to the effort; consistency with proposed budget detail; and ability to perform the duties within the operational range of budgets provided by SNEP.</p>	15
<p>4. Tracking and Measuring Environmental Results: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which it demonstrates the applicant's ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Track and measure their progress and the progress of subawardees in achieving environmental results through the expected outputs and outcomes described in Section I.C. and Appendix D for the tasks being proposed; (10 points) b. Assess effectiveness of its approach for the subaward competition and for subawards, and to incorporate monitoring, measuring, and reporting as components of its subaward process; and (10 points) c. Characterize specific environmental results that will be targeted for protection and/or restoration by activities proposed within the SNEP region. (10 points) 	30
<p>5. Transferability of Results: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application includes an adequate plan to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Gather, assess, and develop information to support lessons learned from the proposed activities; (5 points) b) Transfer the documentation/information/data/results/recommendations to SNEP partners and stakeholders in the SNEP watershed in a timely manner; and (2.5 points) c) Document and distribute results to the appropriate audience or summarize information, so that the SNEP can disseminate in a timely manner. (2.5 points) 	10
<p>6. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.</p>	5

C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible proposals will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in **Section V.B.** above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and other federal agencies with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of SNEP. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked proposals to the selection official for final selection. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider funding availability as well as programmatic goals and priorities.

D. Additional Provisions Incorporated By Reference

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 at the website link, are important, and

applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VI: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

EPA expects to notify applicants by email of funding decisions on or around July 17, 2017. ***This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work.*** The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Region 1 grants office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official is authorized to bind the government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect EPA's ability to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The following information will be helpful in preparing the application. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at:
http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm.

Federal Requirements: An applicant selected for federal funding may need to adjust their forms prior to award (see Appendix C for the list of required materials). EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final cooperative agreement amount and work plan content prior to award consistent with agency policies.

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs are those costs incurred by an organization for common or joint objectives and that cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective, project or program but are, nevertheless, necessary to the general operation of its activities. Indirect costs generally include, but are not limited to, facilities operation and maintenance costs, depreciation, and administrative expenses.

If indirect costs are budgeted in the assistance application and the non-profit organization or educational institute does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare and submit an indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with the appropriate federal cost principle, 2 CFR Part 220 (OMB Cost Principles for Educational Institutions) and 2 CFR Part 230 (OMB Cost Principles for Non-profits) within 90 days from the effective date of the award. Alternatively, and in accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f), any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200—States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph D.1.b, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs which may be used indefinitely. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

If a local government does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with 2 CFR Part 225 (OMB Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments). The local government recipient whose cognizant federal agency has been designated by OMB must develop and submit its indirect cost rate proposal to its cognizant agency within six months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year. If the cognizant federal agency has not been identified by OMB, the local government recipient must still develop (and when required, submit) its proposal within that period.

If a state government agency does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it agrees that it will prepare its indirect cost rate proposal in accordance with 2 CFR Part 225. The state government agency must send its proposal to its cognizant federal agency within six months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year.

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

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

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans: In accordance with 40 CFR Sections 30.54 and 31.45, projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

The QMP must document quality assurance policies and practices that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet program objectives. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-2: EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans (refer to <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/r2-final.pdf>, Chapter 2). The recipient's QMP should be reviewed and updated annually as needed. The QMP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 45 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation.

The recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The QAPP is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Requirements for QAPPs can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/r5-final.pdf>.

Deliverables: Awarded applicant will be required to provide a chart or list of deliverables, providing items and due dates.

C. Reporting

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

D. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII: AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact SNEP via email at SECoastalNE@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via email with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-R1-SNEP-2017) by May 29, 2017. All questions and answers will be posted on <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp>. In addition, information about the informational webinar will also be posted on this same website.

VIII: OTHER INFORMATION

In developing the proposal, the applicant may find the following documents helpful.

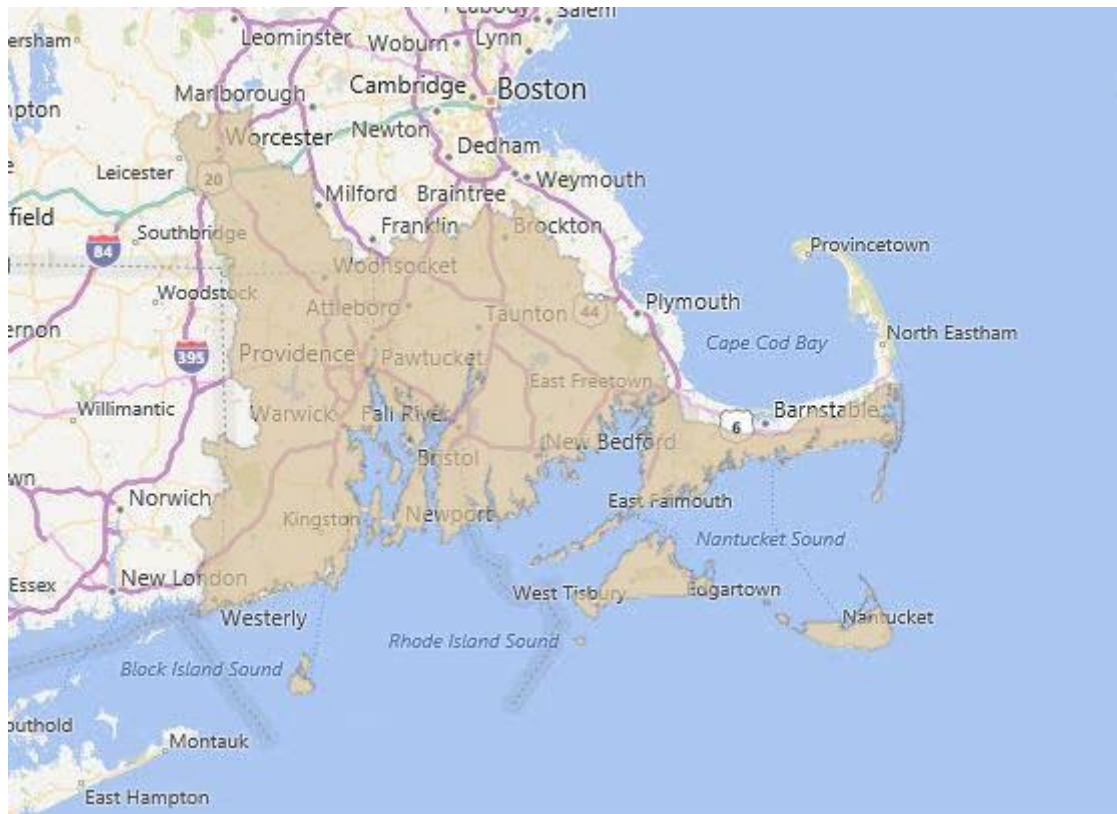
Southeast New England Program for Coastal Watershed Restoration Website
<https://www.epa.gov/snecwrp>

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans
http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html

EPA Strategic Plan
<http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>

Please visit the EPA Grants website (<http://www.epa.gov/ogd>) for questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Appendix A



The SNEP geographic region includes the south-facing coastal watersheds between Westerly, Rhode Island and Chatham, Massachusetts, the watersheds of the Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay National Estuary Programs (NEPs), and offshore islands of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, Elizabeth Islands (Town of Gosnold, MA), and Block Island (Town of New Shoreham, RI)

Appendix B

Sample Budget Detail:

Applicant Name	Federal Grant funds	Non-Federal Match	Total
NOTE: All costs reflect first year of project implementation			
Personnel	Federal Grant	Applicant	Other
Staff salary #1 Project management, etc, etc (XXX hours @ XXX/hour)	\$51,100		
Staff salary #2 GIS coordinator, etc, etc (XXX hours @ XXX/hour)	\$20,400	\$25,000	
Staff salary #3 Grant administration (XXX hours @ XXX/hour)		\$ 5,800	
Town of USA Staff time for site mapping and inspection 120 hours @ \$50 hour.			\$6,000
ABC University Personnel support for water quality surveys (XXX hours @ XXX/hour)			\$12,500
Volunteer time Bioblitz and habitat surveys (200 hours @ \$18 per hour)			\$3,600
Funding for interns @ \$3,800/intern	\$3,800	\$3,800	
Total Salary	\$75,300	\$3,800	\$22,100
Fringe			
Staff #1 (36% of personnel)	\$18,396		
Staff #2 (36% of personnel)	\$7,344		
Staff #3 (36% of personnel)		\$2,088	
Town (29% of personnel)			\$1,740
ABC University (30.2% of personnel)			\$3,775
Total Fringe	\$25,740	\$2,088	\$5,145
Total Salary and Fringe	\$101,040	\$5,888	\$27,245
Supplies	\$3,900		
Total Supplies	\$3,900		

Travel (regional & local) XX local trips@\$.51/mile@60 miles XX flights to national mtgs @ \$650 each XX per diem and hotel @ \$XX	\$3,000			\$3,000
Total Travel	\$ 3,000			\$ 3,000
Equipment				
ABC University Boat operation for 7 surveys@ \$350/survey			\$2,450	\$2,450
Total Equipment			\$ 2,450	\$ 2,450
Contractual				
XYZ Consultants Design Consultation XX hours @ \$40/hr			\$5,000	\$5,000
Total Contractual			\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Other				
Subawards (anticipated)	\$3,000,000	\$300,000	\$550,000	\$3,850,000
Printing/Production	\$ 8,000	\$ 2,000		\$ 10,000
Audit		\$ 1,000		\$ 1,000
Postage		\$ 1,200		\$ 1,200
Telephone/Internet/IT Support	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,000		\$ 7,000
Total Other	\$3,012,000	\$307,200	\$550,000	\$3,869,200
Total Direct Costs	\$3,119,940	\$313,088	\$584,695	\$4,048,523
Indirect Costs				
Indirect (13.02% of Direct Costs)	\$406,216			\$406,216
University indirect (23% on-campus non-research, waived as match)			\$1,432	\$1,432
Total Indirect Costs	\$406,216	\$0	\$1,432	\$407,648
Total Federal Request	\$3,526,156			\$3,526,156
Total Non-Federal Match		\$313,088	\$586,127	\$899,215
Total Application Costs				\$4,425,371

Appendix C

Checklist of Required Materials and Description of Proposal Content (*NOTE: Checklist is for application preparation purposes only. Do not submit.*)

Required Materials (as outlined in Section IV.A)

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. Grants.gov Lobbying Form
5. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
6. EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre-award Compliance Review Report
7. Narrative Application (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described below.
8. Budget Detail – See **Appendix B** for example of expected format.
9. Supporting Materials
 - Resumes or curriculum vitae of staff that will be working on the SNEP grant program
 - Letters of commitment from any partners identified in the proposal in order to confirm the partnership. If no partners are identified, letters of commitment are not required.
 - List documenting past or ongoing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements administered by the applicant, including documentation supporting grant performance and meeting of reporting requirements.
 - Documentation of non-profit status if appropriate

Recommended Format for Proposal Narratives

Proposal narratives must be no longer than 10 numbered pages (8 ½ x 11 inches, single spaced, font size no smaller than 10) and must address the evaluation criteria in **Section V.B**. The first page should include applicant contact information and proposal title. The 10 pages do not include the listed supporting materials, the budget detail, and the SF-424 and SF-424A.

- **Program Description:** Applicants should thoroughly discuss how they address the SNEP priorities identified in the announcement and the criteria in **Section V.B**, the planning process and schedule, and the applicant's approach for addressing any challenges or changes that may arise over the course of the project. Discussion of the schedule should show how it aligns tasks associated with the project to achieve the project's goals and objectives by the project's end.
- **Environmental Results:** Applicants should detail their plan and approach for measuring, monitoring, and reporting progress in achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs. Examples of outcomes and outputs can be found in **Section I.C**. Applicants should demonstrate their knowledge of local environmental challenges as well as the ecosystem services and functions that could be targeted for innovative restoration/protection activities by subawardees to contend with these challenges.
- **Subawards:** Applicants should discuss how their approach to seeking, selecting, and overseeing subawardees and projects that will contribute to future achievement of quantifiable water quality and ecosystem improvements, as well as the degree to which proposed activities advance progress towards stated long-term goals. Applicants should address how they will seek out subawardee projects that reduce impacts of nutrients on aquatic life and coastal ecosystems; restore physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function, including those that control nutrient processes; and measure, monitor, and report change in condition and the effectiveness of actions.
- **Transferability of Results:** Applicants should discuss how the lessons and results of the application will be documented and shared widely and easily with agencies, partners, stakeholders, and resource managers both within and outside of the SNEP watershed.
- **Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance:** Applicants should discuss their organizational qualifications, including administrative capacity, travel capabilities, outreach expertise, and the qualifications of staff and project partners, if any. An overview of the organization's familiarity with the

institutional and historical conditions of the region, including impediments to collaboration and regional approaches, should also be included. Applicants should submit a list of federally and non-federally if 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 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in **Section V**, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or 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). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors. In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. Budget Narrative: Applicants should discuss how their budgets align key tasks, costs, and estimated expenditures, and account for both federal and required non-federal cost share/match, including the role EPA funding will play in the overall project.

- Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Applicants should discuss their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended and the project will be completed in a timely and efficient manner.

Appendix D

Questions to help inform subaward competition approach.

Approaches to regional effectiveness in ecosystem management

- What currently hinders more effective regional management in habitat conservation and restoration?
- What is needed to build and sustain capacity to implement environmental management at the appropriate scales, including crossing jurisdictional or other boundaries?
- What technological, methodological, or institutional innovations, including monitoring technology and data management, can be tested and adopted to track and confirm environmental improvements?

Understanding of ecosystem services

- How can we identify and quantify key ecosystem functions appropriate to SNEP coastal watersheds?
- How can ecosystem service values be determined and applied as a decision support tool?
- How can ecosystem functions be translated into a services framework that enables better and more integrated decision-making?
- How do we monitor and adapt to ecosystem changes while still retaining the unique functions provided under current conditions?

Nutrients

- As one of the most critical stressors on aquatic systems, what do we need to know about nutrient sources and their impacts on coastal watersheds and how should we monitor them?
- What new or innovative approaches and technologies may be utilized or implemented to treat or remove nitrogen pollution before it enters into ground and surface waters?

Ecosystem and community resilience

- What gaps need to be filled in order to quantify the socio-economic and environmental value of ecosystem services and functions in the SNEP region?
- What are appropriate socio-economic indicators to measure resilience to stressors?
- What is an effective framework for communicating and responding to ecosystem challenges and services?

Sustainable leveraging and financing

- What financial and management resources are necessary to build a sustainable framework and partnerships to support restoration and proactive measures?
How do we promote and invest in such measures at the broad regional scale and for the long-term that are needed to show results?

This RFA focuses primarily on reducing the impacts of nutrients, especially nitrogen, on aquatic life and coastal ecosystems, and restoring physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function. Ability to measure and monitor effectiveness of actions in these areas is a critical component of the RFA.

Examples of Subaward Project Activities:

- Identifying high priority coastal areas/sub-watersheds and quantifying watershed nutrient sources and loads needing reduction.
- Quantifying and demonstrating nutrient capture capacity of different types of wetland sinks, riparian buffers, and natural infrastructure and incorporating them into planning for TMDLs, nonpoint source reductions, and stormwater management efforts;
- Developing qualitative and quantitative measures to report on the environmental outputs and outcomes of coastal watershed projects, such as interim measures of improvement from BMP installations;
- Identifying opportunities and projects for upstream protection/restoration projects such as protecting headwaters that serve as nutrient sinks for their benefits in avoiding nutrient impacts downstream on habitat and water quality resources;
- Developing and testing methods to quantify and value the benefits of intact or functioning ecosystems; e.g., quantifying the value of wetlands for nutrient removal;
- Identifying and evaluating key stressors in terms of ecological impairments and processes on a watershed scale;
- Creating, designing, and implementing a regional data warehouse and/or tools to consolidate, search, and easily gather environmental and public health information and data about SNEP geographic areas.
- Creating a public web-based interface to enable easy access and collective data analysis about water quality (e.g. dissolved oxygen, temperature, nitrogen) and environmental conditions in the SNEP geographic area