

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

**TITLE:** Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Applications for Continuation and Administration of the Chesapeake Center for Collaborative Computing

**ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE:** Request for Applications

**RFA NUMBER:** EPA-R3-CBP-19-03

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.466**

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

10/12/2018	Issuance of Request for Application
12/07/2018	Application Submission Deadline (See Section IV for more information)
01/18/2019	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
02/13/2019	Approximate date for applicant to submit revised application
04/01/2019	Approximate date of award

EPA will consider all applications that are submitted via Grants.gov on or before 11:59 pm EST on **December 07, 2018**. Any applications submitted after the due date and time will not be considered for funding. No applications will be accepted by facsimile or e-mail. EPA will only accept applications submitted via Grants.gov, except in limited circumstances where applicants have no or very limited Internet access (see section IV).

### **SUMMARY**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) is announcing a Request for Applications (RFA) from applicants to provide continued administration and development of the Chesapeake Center for Collaborative Computing (C4), including operating and maintaining the existing environment, expanding and enhancing the infrastructure to fully meet CBP partnership requirements, and assessing technological advances to ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency in support of the non-federal organizations that are members of the CBP partnership.

While the CBP partnership comprises federal and non-federal organizations, any activities funded under this RFA shall only directly support the non-federal partners. The CBP Partnership will provide programmatic direction to the cooperative agreement recipient through the CBP partnership's Management Board (Management Board), its Goal Implementation Teams, and its Scientific, Technical, Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Workgroup.

**FUNDING/AWARDS:** This RFA will cover the project period up to and including six years from an expected start date of **April 1, 2019**. EPA plans to award one cooperative agreement under this RFA. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$4,400,000 to \$5,600,000, with an estimated \$650,000 to \$850,000 available for the first year. Increased

funding is anticipated in some future years to allow for increased implementation and procurement costs. See table below.

Range	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Low	\$650,000	\$700,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$800,000	<b>\$4,400,000</b>
High	\$850,000	\$900,000	\$950,000	\$950,000	\$950,000	\$1,000,000	<b>\$5,600,000</b>

## **FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT**

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## **I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Background**

#### ***1. About the Chesapeake Bay Program***

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1267, the Chesapeake Bay Program is responsible for supporting the Chesapeake Executive Council through many actions, including the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

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

The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the Chesapeake Executive Council (Executive Council), which, through its leadership, establishes the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and exerts its leadership to rally public support for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection and signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection.

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

The Management Board provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program. It directs and coordinates all the Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) and their respective workgroups.

The membership of the GITs and the Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Team include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Thus, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and others become active members of the broad Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection partnership.

Pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 117(b)(2), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (b)(2), the Chesapeake Bay Program Office is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the Executive Council in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay Program Office and Chesapeake Bay Program, both mentioned above, are two distinct entities.

## ***2. 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement***

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

The cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement will help support all 10 goals in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and further the following principles as stated in the Agreement: operate with transparency in program decisions, policies, actions and reporting to strengthen public confidence in our efforts, adaptively manage at all levels of the partnership to foster continuous improvement, and engage citizens to increase the number and diversity of people who support and carry out the conservation, protection and restoration activities necessary to achieve the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

## ***3. The Chesapeake Bay TMDL, WIPs, and the Midpoint Assessment***

The EPA has established the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), a historic and comprehensive “pollution diet” with strong accountability measures to enable implementation of actions to restore clean water to the Chesapeake Bay and the watershed’s streams, creeks and rivers.

The Chesapeake Bay TMDL – the largest ever developed by EPA – identifies the reductions of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment across Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia that are necessary to meet applicable state water quality standards in Chesapeake Bay, its tidal tributaries and embayments. These pollutant limits were further divided by each of the seven Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions (jurisdiction) and major river basin based on state-of-the-art modeling tools, extensive monitoring data, peer-reviewed science and close interaction with jurisdictional partners.

Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) are plans for how each of the jurisdictions, in partnership with federal and local governments, will achieve their respective Chesapeake Bay TMDL allocations and planning targets. The Phase I WIPs were developed in 2010 by the jurisdictions to inform the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL wasteload and load allocations. The Phase II WIPs were developed in 2012 by the jurisdictions to meet nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment planning targets based on updated information generated through the Partnership’s Phase 5.3.2 Chesapeake Bay watershed model. The goal of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and supporting jurisdictional WIP process is to implement by 2025 all nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction practices needed to fully restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal rivers.

EPA expects practices in place by 2017 to meet 60 percent of the necessary reductions, and the CBP partnership is completing a Chesapeake Bay TMDL Midpoint Assessment to review progress and adjust nutrient and sediment goals if necessary. The CBP partnership has recently updated and reviewed the latest science, data, models, and decision support tools to be used in estimating progress in nutrient and sediment pollutant load reductions. Phase III WIPs will be developed by jurisdictions based on the results of the Midpoint Assessment and new information provided by the Phase 6 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model and related updates of the Chesapeake Bay Airshed Models and the Chesapeake Water Quality and Sediment Transport Model. The Phase III WIPs will provide information on actions the seven watershed jurisdictions intend to implement between 2018 and 2025 to meet their respective Chesapeake Bay TMDL goals.

#### ***4. Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership’s Environmental Models***

Models of the Chesapeake Bay’s airshed, watershed, estuary, and living resources have been developed by the partners and linked together over the past 30 years. The CBP partnership’s suite of models assists in understanding the important processes affecting the health of the watershed and the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. These modeling tools provide the Chesapeake Bay watershed state and local jurisdictions with an understanding of the effect of various control strategies on pollutant levels and the level of nutrient and sediment load reductions needed to restore the Chesapeake Bay and achieve the applicable water quality standards for dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-*a*, underwater bay grasses and water clarity. By quantifying the management actions necessary to restore Chesapeake Bay habitats and the living resources

dependent on those habitats, these integrated Partnership models provide guidance to environmental managers and citizens on where the most cost-effective reductions can be made so that controls are equitable and broadly supported.

Development and application of the next generation of Chesapeake Bay models will require an unprecedented level of direct involvement of a wide array of non-federal CBP partners and stakeholders in each step of the planning, development, calibration, verification, management application, and continued refinement/enhancement. Given that Bay restoration decision-making also occurs at a local scale, the next generation of the CBP partnership's Chesapeake Bay models must reflect these shifts in scale. These models must be developed for direct application by state and local jurisdictional partners, academic partners, and stakeholders alike, feeding directly into their respective and unique decision-making processes and supporting adaptive management at all scales.

Through the application of airshed, watershed, estuarine, and living resource modeling activities, the CBP partnership's state and local jurisdictional partners gain access to information that is used directly in decision-making for Chesapeake Bay environmental restoration efforts. Chesapeake Bay environmental models are developed, calibrated, verified, and applied through an expanding cooperative network of state, federal, regional and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutional partners. These partnership models help set the pace and direction of Chesapeake Bay restoration by providing information on water quality and biological resource responses to different management actions.

### ***5. Chesapeake Information Management System***

Since 1997, the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership has relied on the Chesapeake Information Management System (CIMS) to provide a collaborative computing network for the entire CBP Partnership. CIMS was the external partnership network called for by the 1996 Chesapeake Executive Council's Adoption Statement titled "Strategy for Increasing Basin-Wide Public Access to Chesapeake Bay Information," (<http://archive.chesapeakebay.net/pubs/532.pdf>). The Strategy states that CIMS should be designed in such a way as to serve the needs of the general public and afford opportunities for CBP partners and stakeholder groups to conduct business and share policy and technical information in an efficient manner.

For over two decades, CIMS served as the resource for hosting partner websites and providing a collaborative environment for CBP partners to co-author and co-develop complex data analyses and models. CIMS was designed and implemented as an on-premises network staged at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office in Annapolis, Maryland. At its peak, the CIMS network contained over 50 physical and virtual servers and 70 workstations running a portfolio of scientific applications and providing a computing network for on-site and remote scientists. CIMS was also the primary publication portal for public information and data. CIMS was originally governed by the CBP Information Management Subcommittee and subsequently by CBP's STAR Team with oversight by the Management Board.

The recent proliferation and availability of information and data challenged the CIMS network both in the flexibility and high-availability requirements necessary to support partnership efforts.

The CBP partnership's assets require around-the-clock availability to meet the growing number of partners' demands and the flexibility to scale up or down to meet emerging needs of the Partnership. In 2013, EPA issued an RFA seeking applications for the establishment of the CBP partnership's Chesapeake Center for Collaborative Computing (C4) as a continuation of, and ultimate replacement for, CIMS. The RFA led to an EPA award of a successful cooperative agreement that considerably changed the information technology architecture supporting the CBP partnership. Under the cooperative agreement, the on-premises CIMS network was successfully redeveloped utilizing a state-of-the-art cloud computing architecture. High performance computer models were transitioned from on-premises infrastructure to Amazon Web Services cloud-based virtual infrastructure. Collaboration tools, applications, and email were migrated to the Microsoft Office 365 cloud.

The CBP partnership has seen the following benefits from the cloud-based information technology architecture supporting C4:

- Elimination of network downtime, including the sustained availability of public websites and CBP partnership modeling tools and extensive data resources through government shutdowns and natural disruption events;
- Increased processing speed of scientific systems, models and other decision support tools, allowing CBP partnership analysts and public users to generate results quicker, access data and information faster, and increase their productivity; and
- Increased accessibility and transparency of scientific systems, models and other decision support tools, by allowing direct CBP partnership and public user access to previously internal-only accessible tools and data.

## **B. Scope of Work**

This RFA is seeking cost-effective applications from eligible applicants for continued administration and development of the CBP partnership's Chesapeake Center for Collaborative Computing (C4). This includes operating and maintaining the existing environment, expanding and enhancing the infrastructure to fully meet CBP partnership requirements, and assessing technological advances to ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency in support of the non-federal organizations that are members of the CBP partnership. While the CBP partnership comprises federal and non-federal organizations, any activities funded under this RFA shall only directly support the non-federal partners. The CBP partnership will provide programmatic direction to the cooperative agreement recipient through the CBP partnership's Management Board, its six Goal Implementation Teams, and its Scientific, Technical, Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Workgroup.

The U.S. EPA CBPO plans to award one cooperative agreement under this RFA to an organization oriented towards providing highly specialized management of cloud-based and high-performance computing (HPC) infrastructures supporting complex environmental models and data, with specific experience implementing innovative information technology solutions to

a highly-distributed workforce. The selected organization shall support the CBP partnership's mission of taking the actions necessary to achieve the goals and outcomes of the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. This mission also includes:

- Providing high-capacity and high-performance information technology infrastructure solutions to meet the diverse needs of state, regional and local agencies, institutions, and organizations.
- Determining requirements across a broad range of diverse agencies, institutions and organizations, translating those requirements into technical specifications, and then operating, maintaining, and administering cloud-based infrastructure (including high-performance computing environments).
- Evaluating solutions that are both cost-effective and efficient.
- Following applicable cybersecurity protocols, and procuring and/or developing the required infrastructure to support the pre-defined technical specifications.
- Working with environmental data and systems.
- Procuring and administering Amazon Web Services-based environments.

The above areas of emphasis need not be the sole missions of the proposing organization.

The U.S. EPA CBPO plans to award one cooperative agreement under this RFA. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$4,400,000 to \$5,600,000, with an estimated \$650,000 to \$850,000 available for the first year. Increased funding is anticipated in some future years to allow for increased costs. See table below.

Range	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
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EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year as funds may be limited based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, contributions from other state and federal agencies, partners, organizations, and other applicable considerations.

If your organization has an interest in this project, has the skills to accomplish the activities listed below, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit an application. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activity is a multi-year project, so the application should have a work plan, budget, and budget detail for the first and all subsequent years.

**Activity: Administer and Expand Implementation of the Chesapeake Center for Collaborative Computing**  
**Estimated Funding: \$650,000-\$850,000 per year**

In continued support of CBP's transition from CIMS to C4, EPA intends to award a cooperative agreement to an organization to support the CBP partnership's continuing mission of implementation of the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. This mission includes collective work to advance restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its watershed through a focus on 10 overarching goals and 31 underlining outcomes, most of which are time-bound, measurable targets that directly contribute to achieving individual goals.

The following are examples of the types of activities the recipient may carry out to support the administration of C4. Applicants may consider these activities as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the necessary infrastructure, administration, and technical support required to operate, maintain, and enhance C4.

**1. Perform administration, operations, and maintenance of existing C4 infrastructure**

Since 2013, C4 has expanded dramatically to include all the CBP partnership's infrastructure, supporting the Management Board, its goal implementation teams, and other CBP workgroups (<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/about/organized>). Documentation of the current infrastructure can be found in Appendix C. The current environment includes over 60 server instances, both Windows and Linux, in an Amazon Web Services (AWS) environment that support the CBP partnership, which includes hosting partnership websites and maintaining the infrastructure to support co-authoring and co-development of modeling and monitoring platforms and applications across the partnership. It also includes implementation of Microsoft Office 365. The CBP partnership has made substantial investment in AWS for its collaborative computing center, and it is expected that the future recipient will build upon the progress already made by continuing to utilize AWS-based environments.

The full environment must remain operational during any transition phase as well as through the duration of this award. Other activities may include:

- Working with incumbent and the Management Board, developing any necessary transition plans to ensure continual operation of C4 during any transition phase.
- Identifying cost-effective procurement approaches that take advantage of AWS's reserved instance pricing model and evaluating cloud-based versus on-premise solutions, as necessary.
- Procuring and/or developing additional infrastructure, platforms, software, and environments, as needed, to address the evolving needs of the Management Board, its goal implementation teams, and relevant workgroups.
- Working with the Management Board, its goal implementation teams, and relevant workgroups to continually reassess requirements to make necessary improvements to meet the ever-evolving CBP partnership requirements and needs.
- Developing a multi-year capacity and implementation plan for supporting the anticipated growing requirements and needs of the Management Board, its goal implementation



teams, and relevant workgroups to ensure C4 will be capable of scaling as necessary to support anticipated growth in the cumulative computing needs of the CBP partnership.

- Maintaining existing on-premise computing network capable of supporting the CBP's non-federal partners located within EPA's Annapolis office.
- Ensuring that the infrastructure, environments and/or platforms managed under this agreement meet the applicant's security standards by conducting security audits and implementing security controls.
- Seeking opportunities to standardize environments and platforms to achieve the most cost-effective method for procuring the necessary infrastructure while supporting the current C4 infrastructure.

## **2. Fully develop the C4 high-performance computing environment and expand/enhance C4 to fully support the collaborative needs of the partnership**

While all the CIMS infrastructure has been transitioned to C4, opportunities for continued development and improvement exist. Of key interest to the CBP partners is the development and implementation of a remote access solution to allow the CBP partnership access to C4 resources from alternate locations. The CBP partnership comprises diverse agencies, institutions and organizations that are distributed throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Determining an approach to connect these users and allow them to collaborate effectively is a high priority for the CBP partnership. Additional areas for enhancement and expansion of C4 include fully building a high-performance computing (HPC) environment to support the CBP partnership's modeling tools and expanding the CBP partnership's implementation and use of collaboration tools. Each of these areas should be evaluated for cloud-based versus on-premise implementation, based on cost and appropriateness. Activities in support of this goal may include:

- Working with the Management Board to determine the technical specifications and approaches for implementing a remote access solution that allows the CBP partnership to access necessary tools and applications from alternate work locations. Evaluation may include VPN, virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), and other remote access solutions. Develop and implement remote access solution(s) based on evaluation findings.
- Evaluating existing C4 infrastructure supporting the CBP partnership models and scientific systems for opportunities to increase performance and reduce costs by adopting specific HPC technologies, standardizing environments and platforms, and procuring additional software/infrastructure, as necessary. This may include evaluation of cloud-based versus on-premise solutions.
- Working with the Management Board, the goal implementation teams, and relevant workgroups to seek opportunities to appropriately scale HPC environments to ensure that adequate resources are available during periods of high usage/demand, and that costs are minimized during periods of low usage/demand.
- Working with the Management Board to determine the approaches and technical procedures allowing partners to share documents, data, and content across the partnership in support of the Management Board, goal implementation teams, and relevant workgroup goals and objectives.

- Developing the technical specifications required to support the collaborative needs of the Management Board, its goal implementation teams, and relevant CBP workgroups; and provision the necessary software to support these collaborations, seeking opportunities to standardize platforms across the CBP partnership’s diverse array of agencies and organizations where possible.

### **3. Monitor trends and emerging technologies in high-performance computing and cloud-based infrastructure and evaluate them for implementation in C4**

The CBP partnership recognizes the rapid evolution and proliferation of technology that may be available to support this need, particularly over the six-year timeframe of this project. It is quite likely that new technological approaches will yield more effective and cost-efficient methods for satisfying this requirement over the course of the six years. The expectation is that the recipient will monitor and assess technological improvements and, through the Management Board, report technologies and approaches that may yield more cost-effective and/or efficient results. EPA is especially interested in incorporating emerging and innovative cloud technologies (*e.g.*, Docker, NoSQL, in-memory database technologies, serverless approaches, *etc.*) where appropriate to realize improved performance and decreased costs.

## **C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs**

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

### **1. Linkage to EPA’s Strategic Plan**

The overall objective of this competition is to provide technical, programmatic, and administrative support for the CBP partnership in support of the most cost-effective, efficient, and targeted pollutant load reduction and other implementation actions toward reaching the goals and outcomes of the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* under Section 117(d)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA’s [FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan](#). Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 1: Core Mission and Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water Goal of the EPA Strategic Plan. All applications must be for projects that support the goals and objectives identified above.

[EPA Order 5700.7A1](#) also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the priorities described above.

## **2. Outputs**

The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Expected outputs from the activity to be funded under this announcement may include the following:

- Information technology environments, platforms, and software required to provide web hosting services for the Management Board, goal implementation teams and relevant workgroups
- Information technology environments, platforms, and software required to provide advanced document and data sharing services for the Management Board, goal implementation teams, and relevant workgroups
- Information technology environments, platforms, and software required to provide collaborative model authoring and monitoring data services for the Management Board, goal implementation teams, and relevant workgroups
- Information technology environments, platforms, and software required to provide for remote access to the above-mentioned tools by the distributed members of the CBP partnership
- Cost-effective, efficient, highly-available, scalable, and reliable infrastructure to support all the above outputs

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

## **3. Outcomes**

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

- More effective management actions taken to carry out the outcomes of the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* due to improved access to collaborative documents, data, and enhanced models.
- Increased transparency into CBP partnership decision-making due to increased and improved access to the environmental data and associated models used in the Partnership’s collaborative decision making.
- Improved public participation and engagement resulting from full publication of web content, data, and documents regarding progress and management actions taken toward achieving the six goals of the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

## **D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations**

The grant issued as a result of this announcement is authorized under the Clean Water Act Section 117(d), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d). Under Clean Water Act Section 117(d) (1), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d)(1), EPA has the authority to issue grants and cooperative agreements for the purposes of protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. This project is subject to the Office of Management and Budget' (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 CFR Part 1500).

## **II: AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards**

EPA plans to award **one** cooperative agreement under this RFA. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$4,400,000 to \$5,600,000, with an estimated \$650,000 to \$850,000 available for the first year. Increased funding is anticipated in some future years to allow for increased costs. See table below.

<b>Range</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Total</b>
Low	\$650,000	\$700,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$800,000	<b>\$4,400,000</b>
High	\$850,000	\$900,000	\$950,000	\$950,000	\$950,000	\$1,000,000	<b>\$5,600,000</b>

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

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

### **B. Award Type**

The successful applicant will be issued a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

For this project, federal involvement would typically be in the form of participation with other CBP partners and stakeholders in an advisory capacity to the grantee. This participation is expected to include involvement through the CBP Management Board, goal implementation teams, and related committees and workgroups (on which EPA also participates to ensure that all the recommendations for technical work support the CBP partners). All work conducted is to support the efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its surrounding watershed.

### **C. Partial Funding**

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

### **D. Expected Project Period**

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is six years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFA is **April 1, 2019**.

### **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 200.458 and 2 CFR 1500.8. If EPA determines that the requested pre-award costs comply with the relevant authorities, and that the costs are justified as allocable to the project, then these costs may be included as allowable expenditures at the time that the assistance agreement is prepared.

However, if for any reason EPA does not fund the application 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 3's grant official.

## **III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

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

### **B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements**

Pursuant to Clean Water Act 117(d)(2)(A), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d)(2)(A), the agency shall determine the cost-share requirements for awards. The CFDA Number 66.466 states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost-share ranging from five to 50 percent of

eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For this RFA, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of five percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

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

### **C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

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

1. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the project narrative, pages in excess of the page limit will not be reviewed.
2. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.
3. Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with James Hargett at [hargett.james@epa.gov](mailto:hargett.james@epa.gov) (see Section VII, Agency Contact) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.
4. The project funded under this announcement must be linked to the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.
5. For applications to be considered eligible for funding, substantive project-related work included in the application must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which

includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia.

6. Applications must show how they will meet the five percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B.
7. Applications requesting more than the maximum funding amount listed in the range for the applicable activity will be rejected.
8. Applicants must address each item under the activity for which they apply.
9. If a application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

#### **IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

##### **A. How to Obtain an Application Package**

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from Grants.gov.

##### **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Each application will be evaluated using the criteria referenced in Section V.B. of this announcement. You must submit a single-spaced project narrative of up to 15 pages in length by the date and time specified in Section IV.C below. Excess pages will not be reviewed. The format for the project narrative is contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the application. Applications that are not prepared in substantial compliance with the requirements in Appendix A will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

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

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.
2. **SF-424A, Budget Information** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown in Section A on Line 5(e) and on Line 6.k of Column (1) of Section B while recipient's total cost-share should be shown in Section A on Line 5(f) and Line 6.k of Column (2) of Section B. The amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a

percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

3. **SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs**
4. **Grants.gov Lobbying Form**
5. **EPA Form 5700-4, Pre-award Compliance Review Report**
6. **EPA Key Contacts Form**
7. **Project Narrative Attachment Form** – The format for project narrative is described in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the project narrative.

All review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the project narrative. The project narrative shall not exceed **15** pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10, and the project narrative must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper. Note that the **15** pages include all supporting materials such as resumes or *curriculum vitae* and letters of support. Documentation for the budget detail, non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, and forms 1 through 6 are **not** covered by the page limit.

### **C. Intergovernmental Review**

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. This program is eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372, An Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. See this link for information and instructions: <https://wcms.epa.gov/grants/epa-region-3-grants-and-audit-management-branch-intergovernmental-review-process-and-single>. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your application is selected for funding.

### **D. Funding Restrictions**

#### **Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority**

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

#### **Allowable Costs**

EPA assistance agreement funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Federal funds may not be used for



cost-sharing for other federal grants (except where authorized by statute), lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to the provisions of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles. During the grant negotiation, any ineligible costs outlined in the application (i.e. lobbying activities) will be excluded in the final grant award.

#### **E. 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 Jessica Durand  
USEPA Headquarters  
William Jefferson Clinton Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.  
Mail Code: 3903R  
Washington, DC 20460

##### **Courier Address:**

OGD Waivers  
c/o Jessica Durand  
Ronald Reagan Building  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Rm # 51278  
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 project narrative 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, 2018, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2018). 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, 2017 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2018, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2018.

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.

## **F. Submission Instructions**

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), go to Grants.gov 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](https://www.grants.gov), please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov), and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through [Grants.gov](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov) and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through Grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit [Adobe Reader Compatibility Information on Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/adobe_reader_compatibility_information_on_grants.gov).

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Go to Grants.gov and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3-CBP-19-03 or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.466), in the appropriate field and click the Search button

**Please Note:** All applications must now be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) using the “Workspace” feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the [Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/workspace/overview).

#### Application Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than 11:59 PM ET on **December 07, 2018**. 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 in Section IV.B. of this announcement using the Grants.gov application package.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time- and date-stamped electronically. If you have not received confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact James Hargett at [hargett.james@epa.gov](mailto:hargett.james@epa.gov). Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

#### **G. 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](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov). It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation. The [Grants.gov](https://www.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 James Hargett with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact James Hargett at 410-267-5743. 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 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](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov) representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact James Hargett at 410-267-5743.

b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from [Grants.gov](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov), send an email message to James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the [Grants.gov](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov) stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal and it is too late to reapply, promptly send an email to James Hargett at hargett.james@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](https://www.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.

## H. 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 sub-awards under grants, and application assistance and communications, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

## V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews applications for threshold eligibility purposes as described in Section III, the CBPO will conduct a merit evaluation of each eligible application. Reviews will be performed by a team of professionals from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. All reviewers will sign a conflict of interest statement certifying that none exists.

### B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

The evaluation criteria below apply to the activity in Section B of this RFA.

Criteria	Points
<b>1. Organizational Capability, Scope and Approach:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. How well the application demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience to perform the proposed activity identified in Section I.B that is the subject of the application. <b>(20 points)</b></li><li>b. The quality of the application and how it demonstrates applicant's ability to timely and successfully achieve the activity to support the CBP partners described in Section I.B., regardless if the application encompasses one of the examples provided or puts forth an alternative approach that achieves the goal of the activity. <b>(15 points)</b></li><li>c. How well the application demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience working with and supporting multiple management agencies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholder collaborative efforts to provide technical and scientific expertise to enhance environmental protection decision-making. <b>(10 points)</b></li></ul>	45

<p><b>2. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:</b> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in their project narrative; <b>(5 points)</b></li> <li>b. History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in their project narrative including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not; <b>(5 points)</b></li> <li>c. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. <b>(5 points)</b></li> </ul> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items a and b of this criterion, 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 you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the project narrative and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors. (For Items a and b above, 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.</p>	15
<p><b>3. Seamless Transition:</b> Applicants will be evaluated based on how well they can become fully functional in the roles described in the announcement once a cooperative agreement is awarded and how the applicant will bring about a “seamless” transition in the provision of the described support to the CBP partnership and its management structure. <b>(15 points)</b></p>	15
<p><b>4. Cost-effectiveness:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate each application based on the degree of cost-effectiveness, considering the following factors: organizational overhead, budget breakdown, and ability to control cost for the relevant activity listed in Section I. <b>(10 points)</b></p>	10
<p><b>5. Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application includes an adequate plan to gather information and lessons learned from the project <u>and</u> transfer the documentation/information/data/results/recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders across the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner. <b>(5 points)</b></p>	5

<b>6. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds:</b> 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. <b>(5 points)</b>	5
<b>7. Environmental Results:</b> Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the environmental outputs and outcomes identified in Section I.C of the RFA. <b>(5 points).</b>	5

### C. Review and Selection Process

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

### D. Additional Provisions

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses. These points and the other provisions that can be found at the website link <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

## VI: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that applicants will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around **January 18, 2019** either via email or U.S. Postal Service. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of award will be made by the EPA Region 3 grants office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official is authorized to bind the government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application



package. A federal project officer provides assistance in the application process and negotiates a work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

## **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

If your application is selected, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. Any information about general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/>.

### **Federal Requirements**

An applicant whose application is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award. 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.

### **Incurred Costs**

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

### **EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans**

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

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

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



**Deliverables**

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. Disputes**

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <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 of the announcement.

**E. 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 <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

**VII: AGENCY CONTACT**

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact James Hargett via email at [hargett.james@epa.gov](mailto:hargett.james@epa.gov). All questions must be received in writing via email or fax at 410-267-5777 with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-R3-CBP-19-03). All questions and answers will be posted on <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>.

**VIII: OTHER INFORMATION**

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

*Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Management Strategies*  
[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what\\_guides\\_us/watershed\\_agreement](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement)

Electronic copy of the *CBP Guidance for Data Management*  
[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-01/documents/attachment8cimsgrant\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-01/documents/attachment8cimsgrant_guidance.pdf)

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

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

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

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

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

Further information on CBP committees is located at:

[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/how\\_we\\_are\\_organized](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/how_we_are_organized).

**Appendix A**  
**Project Narrative Format**  
**U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III**  
**Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Applications (RFA) for**  
***Continuation and Administration of the Chesapeake Center for Collaborative Computing***  
**EPA-R3-CBP-19-03**

The following information must be provided or the application may not be considered complete and may not be evaluated.

- A. **Project Narrative Format:** Project narrative as described below shall not exceed 15 single-spaced pages. The project narrative must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 15-page limit includes all supporting materials, resumes or *curriculum vitae*, and letters of support but **excludes** the budget detail, documentation of non-profit status, and the SF 424 and 424-A forms. Applicants must ensure that the project narrative clearly identifies the activity number. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

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

**2. Background** - Include the following in this section:

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

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

- i) A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements of the Program as described in Section I of the announcement for the relevant activity;
  - ii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the project narrative will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project and your plan for tracking and measuring your progress towards achieving them.
- 1. Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Expected outputs from the activities to be funded under this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.
  - 2. Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or

objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outcomes under activities 1 and 2 of this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.

- iii) Review Criteria: Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFA. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative.

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

Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project as well as your staff's expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

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

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

- 1) EPA amount (including any in-kind)  $\div$  95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
- 2) 100% of Total Grant Amount  $\times$  5% = Applicant's Cost-Share Amount

**Appendix B  
EPA-R3-CBP-19-03**

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

**CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST CAP WORKSHEET**

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

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

**Line (b) cannot exceed Line (a).**

## **COMPLIANCE WITH CWA SECTION 117 RESTRICTING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS**

### **Statutory Authority**

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

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

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

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

### Guidance for Determining Administrative Costs

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

#### 1. Administrative Costs

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

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

#### 2. Non-administrative Costs

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

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

#### 3. Calculation of Administrative Costs

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

4. Questions Regarding Administrative Costs

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

## Appendix C EPA-R3-CBP-19-03

### Technical description of current C4 environment

The Chesapeake Center for Collaborative Computing (C4) is currently implemented utilizing Amazon Web Services and a suite of administrative and scientific software. This information is provided as one potential approach to satisfying the requirements detailed in the statement of work. Alternative approaches will be considered. Respondents should address planned activities to transition from the current environment to the proposed environment.

#### *Amazon Web Services*

Type/Size	OS	Quantity	Notes
c4.xlarge	Linux	1	Reserved instance System administration/security
c4.8xlarge	Linux	Up to 9	1 master + up to 8 child nodes Modeling cluster/HPC
m3.large	Linux	3	Reserved instances Administration (1) Puppet, (2) Varnish
m3.large	Windows	1	Reserved instance Administration (1) Jenkins
m4.large	Linux	2	Reserved instances (2) Public web
m4.large	Windows	6	2 Reserved instances Web production (3), dev (1) test (2)
m4.xlarge	Windows	1	Reserved instance Administration (1) backup exec
m4.2xlarge	Linux	1	Scientific Application: PyCast
p2.xlarge	Windows	1	Scientific Application: GIS
r3.large	Linux	4	Reserved instances (2) Elasticsearch; (2) Gluster
r3.large	Windows	8	6 reserved instances (1) GIS; (4) SQLD; (1) SQLS; (1) SQLT; (1) SQLT
r3.2xlarge	Windows	2	1 reserved instance (1) SQLP; (1) SQLT
t2.micro	Linux	8	4 reserved instances Bluefish POC, WebS, VPN
t2.micro	Windows	3	DSC/IIS2D
t2.small	Linux	4	3 reserved instances List, Nagios, SSH, web management
t2.medium	Linux	9	Reserved instances Web, GIS
t2.medium	Windows	8	Reserved instances ADFS, DC, FTP, IIS
t2.large	Linux	7	Reserved instances Atlassian (Bitbucket, Jira, etc.)



***Collaboration***

Product	Quantity	Notes
Microsoft Office 365 E3 monthly subscription	80	80 E3 licenses supporting office applications and email for chesapeakebay.net domain
Administrative Software	Various software required to manage and maintain the environment, including: Netwrix, Solarwinds, Malwarebytes, Nexpose, Symantec, BackupExec, Puppet, and VMware	
Scientific Software	Tableau, Matlab, ESRI, Redgate, Visual Studio/MSDN, Telerik, Resharper	
Collaboration Software	Atlassian, Survey Monkey, Adobe, Web conferencing, Resource scheduling software	