Federal Agency Name: US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5

Funding Opportunity Title: FY19 and FY20 Region 5 Wetland Program Development Grants

Announcement Type: Request for Applications (RFA)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.461

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R5-WPDG-2019

Dates:

Application submission
All applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov as explained further in Section IV. Applications must be submitted by **June 3, 2019 *at* 11:59 P.M. EDT (10:59 P.M. CDT)**. Late applications will not be considered for funding.

Questions submission
Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII, AGENCY CONTACTS, before May 26, 2019. Written responses to questions will be posted on the EPA's website at: https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grant.

Note to Applicants: *Following the EPA's evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.* If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your application to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provisions found at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses .

SUMMARY
Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) assist state, tribal, local government (S/T/LG) agencies and interstate/intertribal entities in developing or refining state/tribal/local programs which protect, manage, and restore wetlands. The primary focus of these grants is to develop/refine state and tribal wetland programs. A secondary focus is to develop/refine local (e.g. county or municipal) programs.

All applications submitted under this RFA must be for projects that *develop or refine* state/tribal/local government wetland programs. **Implementation of wetland protection programs is not an eligible project under this announcement.** An implementation project is one that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge. All monitoring and mapping projects should transfer information or advance the state of knowledge and therefore are eligible under this grant.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs as described in Section I, FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION, of this announcement. States, tribes, local government agencies, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia are eligible to apply under this announcement, as further described herein. Universities that are agencies of a state government are eligible but **must** include documentation demonstrating that they are chartered as part of a

state government in the application submission. Non-profit organizations are not eligible to compete under this RFA.

Under this announcement, as is more fully explained in Section I, there will be two separate applicant tracks for eligible applicants. Eligible states and tribes can submit applications under either Track One or Track Two, while eligible local governments, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia, and eligible universities that are agencies of a state government can only submit applications under Track Two. Applicants under each track will only compete for awards against other applicants in their track. See Section V for further information.

The EPA has discretion to contact the applicant if necessary to discuss the most appropriate track for their application.

Applicants may submit more than one application under this RFA under the applicable tracks. Each application must be separately submitted and be for a different project. In addition, state and tribal government applicants may submit applications under each track but each application must be submitted under either Track One or Track Two. **State and tribal government applicants cannot submit one application covering both tracks.**

This document describes the grant selection and award process for eligible applicants interested in applying for WPDGs under this announcement. A list of previously funded projects is posted at the EPA's Wetland Grants Database for reference.

The total amount of federal funding available under this announcement is approximately $2,800,000 ($1,400,000 expected from FY19 and $1,400,000 expected from FY20) depending on Agency funding levels, which may vary from year to year, and other applicable considerations. The EPA anticipates awarding approximately $1,800,000 in federal funds under Track One and approximately $1,000,000 in federal funds under Track Two under this announcement. It is anticipated that approximately 6 to 12 awards will be made under Track One and approximately 3 to 10 awards will be made under Track Two. Awards will likely range from $75,000 to $300,000 in federal funds.

The EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including to zero) the total number of awards and dollar amounts for each Track or change the ratio of Track One to Track Two assistance agreements it awards. Such change may be necessary as a response to the quality of applications received by the EPA, the amount of funds awarded to the selected applicants, or budget availability.

All applicants must describe in their application how they will contribute the required minimum cost share/matching funds (see Section III.B for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match requirement).

Important Dates:

06/03/19	Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov by **10:59 P.M. CDT (equivalent to 11:59 P.M. EDT).** See Section IV for further information.
07/09/19	The EPA selects applications for awards.
08/19/19	The EPA awards grants to recipients.

The dates above (other than the **(June 3, 2019**) are anticipated dates only, are intended for planning purposes, and are subject to change. See Section IV for further information on submission methods and dates, submission through Grants.gov, and alternative submission methods if necessary and approved.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goals of the EPA's wetland program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. In pursuing these goals, the EPA seeks to develop the capacity of all levels of government to develop and refine effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management.

WPDGs provide states, tribes, local governments, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia (hereafter referred to as applicants or recipients) an opportunity to develop and refine comprehensive state/tribal/local government wetland programs. These programs are meant to:

- develop the capacity of state/tribal/local governments to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition; and
- use one or more of the following "Core Elements" to achieve this goal.

Core Elements. With the work of many states and tribes, the EPA has distilled a set of core elements, actions, and activities that together comprise a comprehensive wetland program. The EPA has summarized these common core elements, actions, and activities in the *Core Elements of an Effective State and Tribal Wetland Program Framework*, also called the *Core Elements Framework (CEF)*. The CEF describes in greater detail each of the four core elements that make up an effective state/tribal wetland program. These four core elements are:

1. monitoring and assessment;
2. voluntary restoration and protection;
3. regulatory approaches including CWA 401 certification; and
4. wetland-specific water quality standards.

Only program development or refinement activities are eligible. Each of these four core elements consists of several broad "actions" that if collectively carried out would complete that core element. Of this broad array of actions, only some are program development actions (as opposed to implementation actions) that are eligible for funding under this RFA. Examples of actions eligible for funding are listed below as outputs. A larger list of examples of actions that are eligible for funding under this RFA can be found under the "Program Building Activities Menu" for each core element at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities.

The statutory authority for WPDGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. §1254(b)(3). Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these funds to developing or refining wetland programs by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Projects that are demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches. The EPA expects that the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project.

Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project.

Wetland mapping as part of a project to develop or refine a state/tribal/local government program to research, investigate, experiment, train, demonstrate, survey, and study the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution is eligible for funding. Wetland mapping and monitoring projects are eligible for funding under this announcement as they are considered studies or investigations that develop or refine state/tribal/local government programs.

Funds received through the WPDG competition cannot be used to fund application tasks to implement a wetland program, for fundraising, honorarium, or to fund the purchase of land or conservation easements. Tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit, e.g., CWA Section 404 permit, CWA Section 402 permit, CWA Section 401 certification, or federal, state, tribal, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are not eligible for funding

because they are implementation tasks. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. Funds cannot be used to construct wetlands used for wastewater treatment, unless those constructed wetlands are to be demonstrations and considered protected by the Clean Water Act. Specifically, funds cannot be used for projects that construct wetlands for the purpose of treatment as part of a treatment system, i.e., stormwater ponds or tertiary treatment wetlands.

Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes, etc.) and office furniture is not eligible for funding under this program. The lease of vehicles is eligible for funding under this program but must be described in the budget detail.

Additional details on ineligible activities are provided under Section III (D), "Ineligible Activities", of this announcement.

Proposed projects must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance. Under the competition, each proposed project must be able to be completed within the project period.

Funds awarded under this announcement for wetland meetings/training workshops may be used by recipients to promote participation and to support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel. Assistance funds may be used by the successful applicant to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees at training sessions, roundtables, or work group meetings. The applicant will select meeting locations, secure meeting facilities (e.g., meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment), and develop meeting agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; the EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the meetings. The EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The WPDG program supports the EPA's FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 1- Core Mission: Deliver real results to provide Americans with clean air, land, and water, and ensure chemical safety, Objective 1.2 - Provide for Clean and Safe Water: Ensure waters are clean through improved water infrastructure and, in partnership with states and tribes, sustainably manage programs to support drinking water, aquatic ecosystems, and recreational, economic, and subsistence activities of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html).

All proposed projects must demonstrate the linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring and protecting aquatic ecosystems. Additional information regarding environmental results is available at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements.

Outputs (deliverables/products) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during the assistance agreement funding period.

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

- Development of a state/tribal Wetland Program Plan (described in Section I.C.1.a, Track One Applicant Applications) (All Core Elements);
- Development of a permit program for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the state or tribe, including assumption of the CWA section 404 permitting program;
- Development of strategies to integrate goals of wetland protection and restoration programs or activities with nutrient and stormwater programs (Voluntary Restoration/Protection and/or Regulatory Core Elements);
- Development of protocols and assessment criteria that can be used to identify wetland restoration and protection priorities (Voluntary Restoration/Protection Core Element);
- Development of wetland maps directly or by supporting wetland mapping coalitions (All Core Elements);
- Development of training materials and tools to help local decision-makers integrate hazard mitigation/flood/drought impacts into wetland protection and watershed planning (Voluntary Restoration/Protection and/or Regulatory Core Element);
- Development of strategies that take into account hazard mitigation/flood/drought impacts into wetland restoration and protection (Voluntary Restoration and Protection Core Element, Regulatory Core Element);
- Development of a report on the ambient condition of wetland resources at a state/tribal or population scale (Monitoring and Assessment Core Element);
- Development of methods or strategies to incorporate wetland water quality standards into EPA approved state/tribal water quality standards (Wetland-specific Water Quality Standard Core Element);
- Development of methods and studies to address at risk or vulnerable wetland ecosystems, aquatic resources and wetland dependent priority species due to flooding/drought (Monitoring and Assessment Core Element);
- Development of a subaward program to help fund research, investigations, experiments, trainings, studies, surveys and demonstration project(s) by local, university, or nonprofit organizations (all the Core Elements); and
- Development of tools or procedures [(or) studies and programs] to evaluate the ecological performance of wetland/stream compensatory mitigation projects (e.g., mitigation banks, in-lieu fee projects and permittee-responsible mitigation) and incorporate the results/findings/lessons learned into future compensatory mitigation project decision-making (Regulatory Core Element).

Outcomes (objectives/goals) are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are used as a way to gauge a project's performance. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. For instance, if there is great need to improve the knowledge and decision-making ability, with respect to environmental issues, of local and state government officials who are in the position of creating laws, ordinances, permits, etc. In this context, certain efforts designed to improve decision-making and behavioral changes can be viewed as environmental outcomes (results) if the grantee can show or measure the improvement in the knowledge of decision-makers who are in the position to create environmental institutional changes that are necessary to restore or protect the environment. In

such instances, outcomes are not measured typically by environmental or water quality indicators, but rather by the institutional indicators that lead to the adoption and application of laws and regulations and the active management of programs necessary to provide environmental protection.

Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, or skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

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

- Increased understanding of a wetland's condition;
- Enhanced knowledge of wetland location, extent, type and change via updating of existing wetland maps or creation of new maps;
- Increased understanding of wetland ecologic condition at population scales (i.e., state, tribal, or regional);
- Improved wetland protection efforts;
- Increased understanding of the impacts of increased flooding/drought on wetlands;
- Improved wetland inventories and baseline condition assessments to address hazard mitigation/flood/drought effects;
- Improved data to use in modeling potential hydrologic change, ecosystem/biogeographic shifts, wetland losses, or wetland increases on the landscape;
- Increased understanding of how to ensure "no net loss" in quality and quantity of wetlands in the CWA 404 or state/tribal regulatory program;
- Increased quantity of wetlands;
- Increased quality of wetlands;
- Improved baseline information on wetland extent, condition and performance to inform effective adaptation to hazards/floods/droughts; and
- Increased understanding of and ecological success of wetland/stream compensatory mitigation.

As part of the application, applicants must describe how the project will result in the protection of wetland resources and link the anticipated outputs and outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Further information is in Section IV.C, CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION, of this RFA. Additional information regarding the EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of outputs and outcomes can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements.

C. TRACK CONCEPT AND PRIORITY AREAS

The EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs. Comprehensive wetland programs help enable states/tribes/local governments to more effectively protect, restore, and manage their wetland resources.

Under this announcement, the EPA will have two separate applicant tracks for eligible applicants.

- **States and tribes** can apply under *Track One or Track Two*.
- **Local governments, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia, and eligible universities that are agencies of a state government** can apply under *Track Two only*.

Applicants may submit more than one application under this RFA under the applicable track. Each application must be separately submitted, be for a different project, and will be separately evaluated. In addition, state and tribal applicants may submit applications under each track but each application must be submitted under either Track One or Track Two. State and tribal applicants cannot submit one application covering both tracks.

Wetland plans for states and tribes are an EPA priority and are referred to as "Wetland Program Plans" that are submitted to the EPA for approval. Local government wetland plans, while eligible for funding, are not subject to EPA approval.

All applications submitted under this RFA, regardless of track, must be for projects that develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs. Accordingly, all applicants must demonstrate in their application how their project will develop or refine a state/tribal/local government wetland program as follows:

> **A. Track One Applicants: demonstrate how they will develop or refine a State or Tribal Wetland Program Plan (and, if they so choose, by also carrying out actions described in the CEF at** https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities**), or reference one or more grant-eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan (see Section I.C.1.a, Track One Applicant Applications) that they plan to undertake; or**
>
> **B. Track Two Applicants: demonstrate that their application is developing or refining a state/tribal/local wetland program. Applicant should indicate which core element(s), and one or more action(s) under a core element(s) described in the CEF at** https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities **they will be developing or refining. A local government, university, interstate agency, or intertribal consortium applicant can reference one or more grant eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved State or Tribal Wetland Program Plan (see Section I.C.1.b, Track Two Applicant Applications) that they plan to undertake as part of the proposed project.**

Effective partnerships are important for the success of projects under this announcement. The complexity of projects to refine state/tribal/local wetland programs requires various levels of government and non-government stakeholders (e.g., community residents, universities, nonprofit organizations, etc.) to work together. The EPA supports and empowers such collaborative partnerships. Such partnerships create ownership amongst partners and the grantee which fosters success and sustainability. Projects are encouraged to include meaningful involvement of all partners ranging from preparation and execution of the project through project evaluation/next steps. Applications will be evaluated based on their partnerships as described in Section IV.C.6.B.9, Partnership Information, and Section V, APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION, partnership criteria.

Track One eligible applicants will only be evaluated against other Track One eligible applicants. Track Two eligible applicants will only be evaluated against other Track Two eligible applicants. See Section V, APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION, for further information.

The two tracks are described in more detail below.

1. **Track Concept**

a. Track One Applicant Applications

Only **state and tribal** applicants are eligible to submit applications and compete under Track One. Track One applications will be evaluated based on the Track One criteria in Section V.A. of this RFA.

The EPA has found that long-term wetland planning (i.e. Wetland Program Plans, or WPPs) helps states and tribes develop their wetland programs more effectively and efficiently and is therefore emphasizing WPPs as a national priority.

Under Track One, states and tribes must submit applications for either: 1) carrying out grant-eligible actions from a current EPA-approved WPP, or 2) developing or updating a WPP (and, if they so choose, also carrying out actions that develop or refine a wetland program described in the CEF at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities). If a state or tribe submits any other type of application, they will be included and evaluated under Track Two.

Wetland Program Plans. WPPs are voluntary plans developed by state and tribal agencies that articulate what the state or tribe wants to accomplish with their wetland programs over time. WPPs describe overall program goals along with broad-based actions consistent with the CEF and more specific activities that will help achieve the goals. Timelines for the WPPs vary between 3-6 years, with more specific timeframes typically associated with the WPP actions/activities.

WPPs should include the following five minimum components:

1. An overall goal statement(s) for the program over the period covered by the WPP.
2. An overall timeframe for the WPP, with a minimum timeframe of three years and a maximum of six years, starting from the time of WPP submittal to the EPA.
3. A list of planned actions consistent with the CEF that the program intends to carry out over the WPP's timeframe, and which, if collectively met, will accomplish the overall WPP goal(s).
4. An intended schedule for the achievement of each action.
5. A listing of more specific activities to be accomplished under each action.

WPPs do not need to be elaborate documents. An effective WPP may be a concise list of planned actions to help create a focused and sustainable wetland program. A WPP can refer to both wetland program implementation and program development efforts planned for the upcoming 3 to 6 years (please note, however, that program implementation efforts are **not** eligible for WPDG funding). WPPs should also include any actions that the state or tribe anticipates funding through sources other than WPDGs. Actions listed in a WPP should be consistent with the broad actions listed in the relevant core elements chapter of the CEF (see individual core element tables at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/what-enhancing-state-and-tribal-programs-effort). It is not necessary for CEF actions to be included verbatim in a WPP, but WPPs should reference the part of the CEF that most closely relates to the proposed actions. WPPs are approved by the EPA in a process that is independent of the WPDG process. EPA-approved state/tribal WPPs can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/state-and-tribal-wetland-program-plans#r1.

WPP versus WPDG application. As described above a WPP is a plan that outlines the goals, broad actions, and activities that a state/tribal wetland program may want to undertake to develop or refine their wetland program. A WPDG application is a more detailed set of projects and tasks that an eligible applicant may undertake over the next year or two to develop actions or activities in an approved WPP, or in the absence of a WPP, a set of actions or activities to develop or refine a state/tribal/local wetland program.

If a state or tribe already has an EPA-approved WPP, they may submit an application to carry out grant-eligible actions in their WPP. The state or tribe must indicate in their application(s) which of the development or refinement actions from their EPA-approved WPP that they intend to carry out. All EPA-approved state/tribal WPPs for Region 5 can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/state-and-tribal-wetland-program-plans#r1.

If a state or tribe does not have an EPA-approved WPP or if their EPA-approved WPP is expiring, they may submit an application to develop/update a WPP. In addition to developing a WPP, a state or tribe may want to include in its application other program developing or refining tasks it wants to undertake during the time it will be developing its WPP. The state or tribe must indicate in its application which core element(s) its project would include, and which associated action(s) its project would take, as described in the CEF at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities.

A state or tribe may submit an application to refine an EPA-approved WPP if the plan needs significant changes. While this is not recommended, a WPP may be refined when the plan has not expired or is not about to expire but additional changes need to be made to update the WPP as a whole or in part, because of more recent developments in the state/tribal program.

States or tribes submitting applications to develop a WPP under Track 1 may want to include travel support and meeting set-up and facilitation support to hold meetings amongst state agencies, tribal agencies, or stakeholders.

b. Track Two Applicant Applications

State, tribal, local government, interstate agencies, intertribal consortium, and university applicants that are agencies of a state government are eligible to apply under Track Two, and these applications will be evaluated based on the Track Two evaluation criteria in Section V.A of this RFA. Local government, interstate agencies, intertribal consortium, and university applicants **that are agencies of a state government** are <u>only</u> eligible to apply under Track Two**.**

Under Track Two, states, tribes, local governments, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia, and universities that are agencies of a state must submit applications that will develop or refine a state, tribe, or local government's wetland program by either carrying out one or more action(s): 1) under a core element(s) from the CEF, or 2) that advance the grant-eligible actions articulated in an EPA-approved WPP. Applicants must indicate in their applications which core element(s) their project would develop or refine, and which associated action(s) their project would take from the CEF at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities. If the applicant is a local government, university, interstate agency, or intertribal consortium and is carrying out an action(s) from an EPA-approved WPP they must indicate which EPA-approved WPP they are working from and which core element(s) their project would develop or refine, and which associated action(s) their project would take from the WPP.

Examples of how to link to an EPA-approved WPP include but are not limited to:

- In their EPA-approved WPP, a state/tribe proposes to develop regulations on groundwater withdrawals in areas surrounding vital wetlands. To link to this WPP, a university proposes to study the effect of groundwater withdrawals on particular types of wetlands common in the state/tribe and provide the results of the study to the state/tribe. The goal would be to inform the regulations governing ground water withdrawals in areas near vital wetlands.
- In their EPA-approved WPP, a state/tribe proposes to survey wetlands identified in its existing wetland inventory to verify location, hydric conditions, and wetland type. To link to this WPP, a county proposes to perform this verification within its own boundaries.

EPA-approved state/tribal WPPs can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/state-and-tribal-wetland-program-plans#r1.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

The EPA anticipates approximately $2,800,000 in federal funding ($1,400,000 expected from FY19 and $1,400,000 expected from FY20) to be available for assistance agreements under this announcement to fund approximately 15 to 20 awards depending on funding availability and other applicable considerations. Under this announcement, the EPA will have two separate applicant tracks with state and tribal governments in Track One or Track Two, and local governments, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia, and universities that are agencies of a state government in Track Two.

The EPA anticipates awarding approximately $1,800,000 in federal funds under Track One and approximately $1,000,000 in federal funds under Track Two. It is anticipated that approximately 6 to 12 awards will be made under Track One and approximately 3 to 10 awards will be made under Track Two. Awards for the selected projects will likely range from $75,000 to $300,000 in federal funding. The EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B, COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS, for information on minimum non-federal cost share/match requirement).

It is anticipated that the assistance agreements awarded under this announcement will have one to 3 year project periods. The project period for assistance agreements under this announcement should be no more than 4 years.

In appropriate circumstances, the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If the EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants 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.

The EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including to zero) the total number of awards and dollar amounts for each track or change the ratio of Track One to Track Two assistance agreements it awards. Such changes may be necessary as a response to the quality of applications received by the EPA, the amount of funds awarded to the selected applicants, or budget availability.

The EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement or make fewer awards than anticipated. In addition, the EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. TYPE OF FUNDING
It is anticipated that grants will be funded under this announcement.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS
States, tribes, local government agencies, universities that are agencies of a state, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia are eligible to apply for WPDGs under this announcement. Tribes must be federally-recognized, although "Treatment as a state" status is not required. As explained in Section I, there will be two separate applicant tracks with states and tribes in Track One or Track Two, and local governments, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia, and universities that are agencies of a state government in Track Two.

Past recipients of WPDGs include, but are not limited to: wetland regulatory agencies, water quality agencies, planning offices, wild and scenic rivers agencies, departments of transportation, fish and wildlife or natural resources agencies, agriculture departments, forestry agencies, coastal zone management agencies, park and recreation agencies, non-point source or storm water agencies, resource conservation districts, city or county, and other state/tribal/local government agencies that conduct wetland-related efforts.

Please note:

- **Intertribal consortia** must meet the requirements of 40 CFR §35.504 (a) and (c) (http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ee8aaaeb886b62da5acc07bba026ab76&mc=true&node=se40.1.35_1504&rgn=div8). This section states that an intertribal consortium is eligible to receive grants only if the consortium demonstrates that all members of the consortium meet the eligibility requirements for the grant and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance. An intertribal consortium must submit to the EPA adequate documentation of: (1) the existence of the partnership between Indian tribal governments, and (2) authorization of the consortium by all its members to apply for and receive the grant(s) for which the consortium has applied.

- **Interstate agencies** are defined in CWA Section 502(2) as "an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." (Administrator refers to the head of the EPA.)

- **Universities must** include documentation demonstrating that they are chartered as a part of a state government in their application. Documentation may include such things as: state constitution, university charter, or case law that has confirmed the university as a state agency. Universities *that are not chartered* as a part of a state government are not

eligible to apply for assistance under this RFA. Please note: If the applicant has applied to previous competitive announcements, they will still need to submit this documentation with their application.

- **Non-profit organizations** are **not** eligible to compete under this RFA.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

All applicants, except as noted below, must describe in their application submission how they will contribute a minimum of 25 percent of the total project cost *in cost share/matching funds* in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306. The cost share/match must be for allowable costs and may be provided by the applicant or partner organization or institution (subawardees). The cost share/match may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value.

If the cost share/match is provided by a partner organization (subawardee), the applicant is still responsible for proper accountability and documentation. A partner organization's indirect cost/fringe generally may be used as cost share/match. Please note that an applicant's and any subawardee's indirect cost/fringe charges must be in accordance with a federally negotiated indirect cost rate under 2 CFR 200.414. Other federal grants may not be used as cost share/ match without specific statutory authority. All grant funds are subject to federal audit.

The total project cost is the sum of the total requested federal share and applicant cost share/match. The minimum cost share/match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four as illustrated by the following formula:

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

For example, if the **total project cost** (sum of federal and non-federal funds) is $100,000 the applicant must be able to provide $25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match.

OR

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

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

If a tribe or intertribal consortium includes its WPDG in an approved Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), the cost share/match requirement may be reduced to 5 percent of the allowable cost of the budget for the first two years in which the tribe or intertribal consortium receives a PPG. After two years, the cost share/match may be increased up to 10 percent of the budget or decreased to 0 percent (as determined by the Regional Administrator based on economic indicators). See Section III.E, PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS, for additional information.

For example, if the **total project cost** for tribal/intertribal consortium in a PPG is $100,000 the tribe/intertribal consortium must be able to provide a $5,000 in-cash or in-kind contribution as cost share/match for the first two years with a 5 percent minimum cost share/ match requirement.

$$\frac{\textbf{Total Project Cost } (\$)}{20} = \text{minimum 5\% tribal PPG cost share/match } (\$)$$

Where the stated purpose is to include WPDG funds in a PPG, a tribe or intertribal consortium may prepare a budget and proposed workplan based upon the assumption that the EPA will approve the waiver amount for PPGs under 40 CFR 35.536. If the tribe or intertribal consortium does not or cannot include the WPDG funds as part of an approved PPG, or chooses to withdraw the WPDG from their PPG, the tribe or intertribal consortium must then meet the 25 percent cost share/match requirements identified above and, as applicable, negotiate a revised workplan with the EPA contact identified in Section VII, AGENCY CONTACTS. The tribe must also provide a new budget with the final grant application based upon the program's cost share/match requirement and the federal award will be reduced accordingly. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that all workplan activities for a project which is competitively awarded will be implemented in accordance with the same budget and as described in the original application. **Tribes should indicate in their application submission if they anticipate including this project, if selected for funding, into an already existing PPG or if they intend to create a new PPG that would include this wetland project.**

Insular areas. Cost sharing and matching requirements under $200,000 for Insular area applicants (the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands) are waived as a matter of law as authorized by the Omnibus Territories Act of 1977, as amended, 48 U.S.C. Section 1469a. Insular area applicants with applications that will require a cost share of $200,000 or more are advised to contact the EPA to determine if cost share requirements will be waived in whole or in part. For contact information, refer to Section VII.

Please contact the EPA Regional grant contact person listed in Section VII, AGENCY CONTACTS, of this RFA if you have any questions about calculating cost share/match.

In order to be considered for funding, all applicants must describe in their application submission how they will contribute the appropriate cost share/match requirement. In addition, if an applicant cannot meet the appropriate cost share/match by the time of award, they will not be eligible to receive funding.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements that if not met by the time of the application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III. A, ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS, of this announcement.
2. Applicants must demonstrate in their application submission how they will meet the cost share/match requirements in Section III.B, of this announcement.
3. Projects must be performed within one or more of the states of EPA Region 5, specifically Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and/or Wisconsin, to be eligible to apply for funding. Inter-jurisdictional watershed projects must primarily be implemented in EPA Region 5. Applicants need not be located within the boundaries of the EPA Region to be eligible to apply for funding so long as the project will be performed within the geographic boundaries of the Region.

4. Applications must **substantially** comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV, APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION, of this announcement, or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the Project Narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. If a single-spaced Project Narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 20 page double-spaced page limit for the Project Narrative specified in Section IV.C.6, of the announcement (Section IV.C.6 establishes a 20 page double-spaced application Project Narrative page limit which would be the equivalent of 10 single-spaced pages; any single-spaced pages in excess of 10 will not be reviewed).
5. All applications submitted under this RFA, regardless of track, must be for projects that develop or refine state/tribal/local government wetland programs. Accordingly, all applicants must demonstrate in their application how their proposed project will develop or refine a state/tribal/local government wetland program as follows: A. For Track One Applicants, by demonstrating how they will develop/update a Wetland Program Plan, or by referencing one or more grant-eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved WPP they plan to undertake as part of the proposed project, **or** B. For Track Two Applicants, by demonstrating which core element(s) and one or more actions under a core element(s) from the CEF at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities their application is developing or refining as part of a local government wetland program, or by referencing one or more grant-eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan they plan to undertake as part of the proposed project.
6. All applications submitted under this solicitation must conduct or promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution as described in Section I., of this announcement.
7. **Demonstration projects** must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration and all or parts of the application will be eliminated from consideration. Such projects are implementation projects and are not eligible for funding under this announcement. Individual project tasks that are for program implementation are not eligible for funding. See Section D., below, on ineligible activities.
8. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as specified in Section IV, APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION, of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the 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.
9. 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 the EPA mishandling or because of technical problems attributable to Grants.gov or relevant Sam.gov system issues. 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 Dertera Collins as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

10. Applicants may submit more than one application under this RFA under the applicable tracks. Each application must be separately submitted and be for a different project. In addition, state and tribal government applicants may submit different applications under either track but each application must be separately submitted. State and tribal applicants cannot submit one application covering both tracks-- those that do will be considered ineligible.

D. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

If an application is submitted that has ineligible tasks, 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.

1. Funds cannot be used to fund wetland program implementation tasks.
2. Funds cannot be used for fund-raising, honorarium, or for the purchase of land or conservation easements.
3. Tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit, e.g., CWA Section 404 permit, CWA Section 402 permit, CWA Section 401 certification, or federal, state, tribal, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are **not** eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks.
4. Funds cannot be used to construct wetlands used for wastewater treatment, unless those constructed wetlands are to be demonstrations and considered protected by the Clean Water Act. Specifically, funds cannot be used for projects that construct wetlands for the purpose of treatment as part of a treatment system, i.e., stormwater ponds or tertiary treatment wetlands.
5. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. Applications that carry out studies that maybe part of an in-lieu fee program/instrument are eligible for funding, but the actual creation of an in-lieu fee instrument is not eligible for funding.
6. Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes) and office furniture is **not** eligible for funding under this program. The lease of vehicles is eligible for funding under this program but must be described in the budget detail and clearly linked to project activities.
7. Restoration of wetlands through conventional methods is ineligible. If a project involves restoration, it must qualify as a demonstration project. Only education and training on restoration, or restoration involving new or experimental methods are eligible. (See also section C.7, above on limitations for demonstration projects).

E. PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS (PPG)

Funds for a WPDG may be included in a PPG. The PPG should be created and in place before the time of grant award or created concurrently with the award of the wetland grant funds. The proposed project under this grant announcement must have a project period that is within the PPG project period. It cannot be longer than the PPG project period. A PPG enables entities to combine funds from more than one environmental program grant into a single grant with a single budget. Under this competition, state government and interstate agency applications must first be selected under the competitive grant process described in this RFA and, in accordance with 40 CFR 35.138, the workplan commitments that would have been included in the WPDG workplan

must be included in the PPG workplan. Similarly, tribal government and intertribal consortia applications must first be selected under this competitive grant process in accordance with 40 CFR 35.535. If a proposed PPG workplan differs significantly from the WPDG workplan approved for funding under this competition, the Regional Administrator must consult the National Program Office (see 40 CFR 35.535). The purpose of this consultation requirement is to address the issue of ensuring that a project which is awarded WPDG funding under this competition is implemented as described once commingled with other grant programs in a PPG. For further information, see the final rules on Environmental Program Grants for state and interstate agencies at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A and tribes and intertribal consortia at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B. The rules are also available at: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&rgn=div6&view=text&node=40:1.0.1.2.32.1&idno=40 (state) and https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=36b93a1b033dd72618e9867c2032b53b&rgn=div6&view=text&node=40:1.0.1.2.32.2&idno=40 (tribal). Local governments are not eligible for PPGs.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. HOW TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicants can download individual grant application forms, including Standard Forms (SF) 424 and SF 424A, from the EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/application-kit-federal-assistance.

B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

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

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

Mailing Address:
OGD Waivers
c/o 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 application 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, 2019, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2019). 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, 2018 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2019, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2019.

Please note that the process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

b. Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to Grants.gov 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 unique entity identifier (e.g., 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 unique entity identifier (e.g., 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-R5-WPDG-2019, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.461), in the appropriate field and click the Search button.

Please Note: All applications must now be submitted through Grants.gov using the "Workspace" feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than June 3, 2019, at 11:59 PM EDT. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application 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 accessed using the instructions above.

Application Materials
The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:
1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) prepared as described in Section IV of the announcement
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) prepared as described in Section IV of the announcement
3. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
5. EPA Form 4700-4 – Preaward Compliance Review Report
6. Project Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form) prepared as described in Section IV of the announcement

Optional Documents:
7. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable (Use Other Attachments Form)
8. Letters of Commitment, if applicable (Use Other Attachments Form)

9. Biographical Sketches of major project managers, support staff members, or other major project participants for the proposed project, if applicable (Use Other Attachments Form)

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 Dertera Collins at (312) 353-6291. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

c. Technical Issues with Submission

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

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

A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission.
Note: Grants.gov issues a "case number" upon a request for assistance.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to 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 at Collins.dertera@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Dertera Collins at (312) 353-6291. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant 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 Dertera Collins at (312) 353-6291.

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 Dertera Collins at Collins.dertera@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 Dertera Collins at Collins.dertera@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.

C. CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION
Applicants should read the following section very carefully and address all requirements.

All application packages must include the following documents:

1. Signed Standard Form 424 (SF-424), Application for Federal Assistance
Complete the form and have it signed. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at http://www.dnb.com.

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

3. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
Complete the form. There are no attachments.

4. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
Complete the form. Attach additional forms as needed.

5. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report
Complete the form. There are no attachments

6. <u>Project Narrative</u>

- The Project Narrative must address Sections A-E below (Section F is optional and not part of the page limit) and must be no more than twenty (20) double-spaced 8.5 x 11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper) except for documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below.
- Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins and that applicants format their Project Narrative as described below for ease of reading. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the Project Narrative.
- For ease of review, the EPA encourages applicants to organize the Project Narrative based on the following outlined sections (A-E).
- Additional pages beyond the 20-page double-spaced limit will not be considered. If a single-spaced Project Narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 20-page double-spaced page limit (ten (10) single-spaced pages is the equivalent of the 20-page double-spaced Project Narrative page limit; any single-spaced pages in excess of 10 will not be reviewed).
- Budget information and the milestone schedule, described below, must be included within the 20-page double-spaced Project Narrative limit, and not in the supporting materials or appendix.
- Any supporting materials (such as commitment letters from partners, annotated resumes, and Quality Assurance/Quality Control Plans) that the applicant chooses to provide are not included in the 20-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative and should be submitted as attachments. See Section IV.C.6.F, below, for a discussion of optional supporting materials.
- When possible please submit all supporting materials as one electronic file, such as but not limited to, PDF.

The 20-page double-spaced Project Narrative must include the information listed below in items A-E (F is optional and not part of the page limit), and address the relevant evaluation criteria in Section V, APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION, for either Track One or Track Two as applicable. The Project Narrative must also address the threshold eligibility factors in Section III.C as applicable. If a particular item is not applicable, the application should clearly state this.

A. **Cover Page -** (included in the page limit) including:
   1. Project Title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less).
   2. Indicate whether the applicant is in Track One or Two.
   3. Track One Applicants: indicate if they will develop a Wetland Program Plan (optional: also list actions described in the CEF at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities), or identify one or more grant-eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan.

      Track Two Applicants: list core element(s), and one or more action(s) under a core element(s) described in the CEF at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-eligible-activities they plan to complete. A local government, university, interstate agency, or intertribal consortium applicant can

reference one or more grant eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved State or Tribal Wetland Program.

4. Name of applicant and applicant's Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. DUNS number).
5. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number).
6. Geographic Location - state(s) **or** tribe (with the name of the state that the tribe is located in); **and** 8- or 14-digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s) with watershed name(s) if the project is not statewide, with weblink provided. If the project is local in scale, provide the name of the city or county, and state.
7. Total project cost, federal dollars requested and cost share/match (if the application is from a tribal applicant and will be placed in a PPG please indicate that as well).
8. Abstract/project summary. The abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the application. It should also include a listing of the main tasks to be accomplished, and a description of the final product(s). The entire abstract should be 250 words or less.

B. **Project Description** - Please address the following categories (1-10) outlined below. Applications will be evaluated according to the selection criteria described in Section V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.

1. <u>Project Description</u>
   Describe briefly what the overall project is about.

2. <u>Description of Need</u>
   Describe the need for the project as it pertains to developing or refining a state/tribal/local government wetland program(s). The description should include:

   - the threats affecting your wetlands/streams/aquatic resources;
   - the need for the actions you are proposing; and
   - how the deliverables will lead to an increase in the quality and quantity of wetlands.

   Describe specific aspects of your geographic area and specific adverse issues your wetlands face and how this issue will be addressed by the development of a WPP or through the core element(s)/action(s) you have described in the application.

   Beyond a narrative description of the need for the project, some examples of ways to provide additional information that the project is needed by a state/tribe/local government - or that the applicant at least exercised due diligence to further demonstrate state/tribe/local government need for the project – include (but are not limited to):

   i. Letters of commitment from state(s), tribe(s), or local government(s) indicating their support/need/use for the project's deliverables.
   ii. Documentation of the responses from efforts made to reach out to states/tribes/local governments with respect to project need. Such documentation could include dates(s) of e-mails, letters, or phone calls and the title(s) of the person(s) the applicant reached;
   iii. Citing results of surveys or studies that show a clear need for the proposed outputs and outcomes;

iv. Citing activities articulated in an EPA-approved WPP.

For ease of review, the EPA encourages applicants to not attach full documents such as surveys, studies, or journal articles. Excerpts (title page plus only relevant pages) from documents are acceptable and encouraged.

The items listed in i-iv above are **not** subject to the Project Narrative page limit.

3. Project Tasks – Describe the steps you will take to meet the project product/output(s) and objective(s). Describe the projects tasks or components and the anticipated products/outputs associated with each task. Include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant. If development of a methodology is part of the proposed project, then describe the planned development steps. If travel assistance is to be provided for non-Federal attendees, describe the process for selecting non-Federal attendees who may receive travel assistance.

4. Milestone Schedule - Provide a milestone schedule that covers each year of the entire project/budget period. Include a breakout of the project tasks into phases with associated tasks and products/outputs. Include the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task. Provide interim milestone dates for achieving each workplan component. Include an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

5. Detailed Budget – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task. An example detailed budget can be found at: Sample Budget and provide the total project cost for each project task. Provide a description of proposed cost for each of the budget categories found in Form SF 424A (i.e., personnel, travel, contractual, other). Identify funding by budget category for each year of funding request. Explain if and how non-federal partners will contribute to the required cost share/match. This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget such as other costs and contracts. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for the EPA to determine whether the costs for each component/task are reasonable and allowable, including the use of the cost share/match funds. Please note that an applicant's and any subgrantee/subawardee's indirect cost/fringe generally may be used as cost share/match.

   Indicate whether funds will be added to a PPG (cost share/match may be reduced to 5 percent for the first two years in which a tribe or intertribal consortia receives a PPG, and then maybe increased to 10 percent or decreased to 0 percent (as determined by the Regional Administrator based on economic indicators). **Tribes must indicate in their application submission if they anticipate including this project, if selected for funding, into an already existing PPG or if they intend to create a new PPG that would include this wetland project.** Budget information may be provided in table format if the applicant chooses but all budget information must be included within the page limit.

   If travel for staff is planned for the project, then indicate it in the budget. Include travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings/training workshops

throughout the proposed project period that are related in scope to the application. If applicable, the budget workplan for the "other" cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-Federal attendees.

While contractual and subgrant efforts may be part of an applicant's application, each WPDG recipient must be significantly involved in the administration of the award. Note that any proposed subgrants or contracts between partners for non-commercial services should be included in the "other" cost category of the SF 424A.

Any optional letters of commitment that you wish to provide, from intended cost share/match partners, should be attached to your application as supporting documents. Letters of commitment are not counted in the 20-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative. The letters should be submitted on the organization's letterhead and may be addressed to the applicant. For more discussion of letters of commitment, see Section IV.C.6.F, below.

Note that additional budgetary guidelines apply to projects that are required to meet the Federal Geographic Data Committee Wetlands Mapping Standards (see Section VIII.C).

6. Transfer of Results – Describe the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results (outputs/outcomes), lessons learned, and/or methods to other states, tribes, or local governments and agencies within and beyond their own organization, so that the others can better develop their wetland programs. Examples of ways to demonstrate how the project may be used by a state/tribe/local government include:

    i. Presentations of results at forums typically attended by representatives from state/tribes/local government wetland programs;
    ii. Documentation of how you intend to share results with a relevant state/tribal/local government wetland program;
    iii. Submitting map data to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for incorporation within the publicly available Wetlands Mapper; https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.html.
    iv. Conducting a webinar or other outreach to state/tribes/local governments at relevant conferences;
    v. Share results on a website and share the website address with relevant organizations.

    Region 5 WPDG grant awardees shall present project results at an EPA Wetland Program meeting, workshop or webinar. The proposed budget should reflect these travel costs, as appropriate.

7. Outputs, Outcomes, and Tracking – This information may be provided in table or narrative form in the application.
    i. Link to the EPA Strategic Plan - Describe how the objective of the project (outcomes) and products (outputs) contribute to meet the EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objective 1.2. Description should include how the application will be a step towards the goal of restoring and protecting wetland resources. (See Section I.B, ENVIRONMENTAL

RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN, of this announcement);

ii. Outputs (products/deliverables)- List and describe the outputs expected to be achieved through the completion of the proposed project (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.B of this announcement);

iii. Outcomes (objectives/environmental improvements) – List and describe the short and long-term outcomes (environmental improvements) expected to be achieved as a result of the project outputs. (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.B of this announcement);

iv. Tracking Outputs and Outcomes - Describe your approach for measuring and tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) and project outcome(s). This does not include your progress reports to the EPA but how you will track your progress to achieving outputs and outcomes that you will then report to EPA. Examples of how you may track and evaluate progress internally and with partners includes but are not limited to: updates/meetings with internal teams/management, updates/meetings with partners, and reevaluation of timeline and budget and other project management activities.

8. Programmatic Capability/ Technical Experience/ Qualifications – Applications should describe the following elements:

   i. Organizational Experience: Provide a brief description of your organizational experience related to the proposed project, and your infrastructure and readiness and ability to implement the proposed project in a successful and timely manner.

   ii. Staff experience/qualifications: Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge relevant to the proposed project. Describe your organization's resources, or the ability to obtain them (through hiring, contracting, and/or other), to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Providing annotated resumes of applicant's key staff is encouraged. The annotated resumes should be attached at the end of the Project Narrative. Annotated resumes are not included in the 20-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative. See Section IV.C.6.F., below, for more on supporting documentation attachments.

9. Partnership Information – List proposed partner entities, and describe their roles, and whether they will participate as subgrantees. Describe the agencies/organizations who will partner with you as appropriate and necessary to successfully conduct the project, to help accomplish outputs/products and to achieve the objectives/outcomes for improving state/tribal/local wetland protection programs. Provide a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of specific partners in the project's components/tasks, and how these partnerships will contribute to developing a state/tribal/local government's wetland program. If an applicant is in the process of engaging a partner, applications should describe how the applicant plans to engage that partner and establish a working relationship to successfully complete the project.

If the applicant is an **interstate agency, intertribal consortium, or university** designated as an agency of a state government they should describe how they have already and/or will continue to partner (during the project) with the appropriate state/tribe/local government(s) in which the project is physically located, or where the results of the project are intended to be used. You may attach optional letters of commitment from intended partners to your application as supporting documents and they will not be counted in the 20-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative. The letters should be submitted on the organization's letterhead and should be addressed to the applicant. For more discussion of letters of commitment, see Section IV.C.6.F, below.
Applicants may also describe how they will partner within their organization, or if appropriate, describe how having no partners is the best approach for accomplishing the objectives of the project.

10. Past Performance - 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 you performed within the **last three years (no more than 5 agreements**, and preferably EPA agreements) and:

    i. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements;

    ii. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; and

    iii. Describe the extent and quality to which you adequately and timely reported on progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether you adequately reported why not.

    Note: In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, the 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 application 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.**

C. **Restoration Demonstration Project Information** - If you are proposing a restoration demonstration project, describe the current environmental condition of the project site and the reason for restoration. Describe how the design and installation of your restoration demonstration project would take relevant potential impacts into account when considering your project's long-term viability (i.e., increased storm event intensity, increased heat stress, increased potential for wildfire). Describe your post-installation monitoring program, and whether it will be funded as a part of this project or with another named funding source. If another funding source would be used, explain how you

are confident that this work will be funded. Describe the regulatory authorities that you must comply with (e.g. CWA Section 404 permits, any applicable state and local permits). You may need to comply with regulations in order to conduct, monitor, and/or maintain a proposed restoration demonstration project. If you are not proposing this type of project, do not provide any description for this section and state "N/A".

D. **Quality Assurance/Quality Control Statement** - If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how and when you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A, QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL, of this announcement for a definition of environmental data which includes more than the collection of new data and information and any additional information). At a minimum most grants will require a Quality Management Plan. A QMP is a document that describes an organization's quality system. It identifies the organizational structure, policy and procedures, functional responsibilities of management and staff, lines of authority, and its processes for planning, implementing, documenting, and assessing all activities conducted under the organization's quality system. If data will be collected using federal funds a QMP and/or QAPP will be required before data collection can begin. To find out more about EPA's QA/QC program go to https://www.epa.gov/quality.

E. **Invasive Species Control** – If applicable, describe how you will ensure that your project does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. Explain how you would respond if an invasive species problem occurs in relation to your project. (See Section VIII.B, INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL, of this announcement for further information).

F. **Optional** - You may provide some or all of the optional attachments listed below. **They are not included in the 20-page limit for the project narrative**. Attachments (some are discussed above) may include the following:

i. Pictures and Maps: Pictures and/or maps may be attached to describe the project.
ii. Staff Resumes: Staff resumes may be attached to describe the experience of relevant applicant staff and should not be more than approximately two pages per person.
iii. Letters of Commitment: Letters of commitment may be useful in demonstrating support for applications submitted under either Track One or Track Two. Letters of commitment may be attached to verify:

- Partners' support/commitment/use for the project;
- Cost share/match or other resources provided by partners; and/or
- How partners/others will make use of the project's results.

Partners who will be providing cost share/match should describe the resources (in-kind services or dollars) that they are committing to the project for each task and budget category (see item 6. Detailed Budget under the Project Description Section, above). Letters of commitment may be useful in demonstrating support for applications submitted under either Track One or Track Two. All letters of commitment should be on the official letterhead of the agency or organization and should be addressed to the applicant.

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

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 confidential business information and contracts and subawards under grants can be found at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing 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.

E. APPLICATION COMMUNICATIONS

In accordance with the EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, the EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. In addition, if necessary, the EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail to the Agency Contact identified in Section VII. Written responses on frequently asked questions or general issues will be posted on EPA's website at: https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

Only those applications that meet the threshold eligibility criteria found in Section III will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights listed below (100-point scale). Applicants need to address these criteria in their application submittal. Points will be awarded based on how well each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the application submittal.

Applicants for Track One projects will be evaluated against each other based on the Track One criteria and applicants for Track Two projects will be evaluated against each other based on the Track Two criteria. There will be separate selection lists for each track.

Track One: Evaluation Criteria for TRACK ONE Applicants – state and tribal governments

1) Project Need (15 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well the applicant demonstrates the need for the project as it pertains to developing or refining a state/tribal/local government wetland program(s).

2) Project Tasks (20points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate a description of the steps the applicant will take to meet the project product/output(s) and objective(s) including a clear description of project tasks and associated products and whether the applicant's approach (methodology) or the steps they propose is sound.
3) Milestone Schedule (10 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they provide a clearly articulated milestone schedule that covers each year of the entire grant period. This includes a breakout of the project tasks into phases with associated tasks and products and the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task. In addition, including a clearly articulated approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner will be evaluated.
4) Budget (5 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable including whether: the applicant identified the requested federal dollars and the total project cost **for each component/task** for each budget item from Form 424A; the applicant explained if and how non-federal partners will provide cost share/match and demonstrated the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of costs and the value of in-kind contributions.
5) Transfer of Results (10 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results (outputs/outcomes), lessons learned, and/or methods to other states, tribes, or local governments agencies within and beyond their own organization, so that the others can better develop their wetland programs.
6) Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes and Tracking (15 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate each of the following elements: i. Outputs and Outcomes– the extent and quality to which the application demonstrates potential environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to the EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objective 1.2. In addition, how the application will be a step towards the goal of restoring and protecting wetland resources will be evaluated. (10 points) ii. Tracking – The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. (5 points)
7) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/ Qualifications (7 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully manage and complete the proposed project taking into account their: i. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their infrastructure and their readiness and ability to implement the proposed project in a successful and timely manner. (3 points) ii. Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (4 points)

8) Partnerships (10 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well the applicant has demonstrated appropriate and necessary partnerships as described in Section IV.C.6.B.9, Partnership Information.
9) Past Performance (8 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their: i. past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement (4 points), ii. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement including whether they submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, (2 points) and iii. the extent and quality to which they adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not (2 points). Note: In evaluating applicants under these 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 application and you 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 you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

Track Two: Evaluation Criteria for TRACK TWO Applicants – states, tribes, local governments, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia, and universities that are agencies of a state

1) Project Need (15 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well the applicant demonstrates the need for the project as it pertains to developing or refining a state/tribal/local government wetland program(s).
2) Project Tasks (20 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate a description of the steps the applicant will take to meet the project product/output(s) and objective(s) including a clear description of project tasks and associated products and whether the applicant's approach (methodology) or the steps they propose is sound.
3) Milestone Schedule (10 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they provide a clearly articulated milestone schedule that covers each year of the entire grant period. This includes a breakout

	of the project tasks into phases with associated tasks and products and the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task. In addition, including a clearly articulated approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner will be evaluated.
4) Budget (5 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable including whether: the applicant identified the requested federal dollars and the total project cost **for each component/task** for each budget item from Form 424A; the applicant explained if and how non-federal partners will provide cost share/match and demonstrated the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of costs and the value of in-kind contributions.
5) Transfer of Results (10 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results (outputs/outcomes), lessons learned, and/or methods to other states, tribes, or local governments agencies within and beyond their own organization, so that the others can better develop their wetland programs.
6) Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes and Tracking (15 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate each of the following elements: i. Outputs and Outcomes– – the extent and quality to which the application demonstrates potential environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to the EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 1, Objective 1.2. In addition, how the application will be a step towards the goal of restoring and protecting wetland resources will be evaluated. (10 points) ii. Tracking – The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. (5 points)
7) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/ Qualifications (7 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully manage and complete the proposed project taking into account their: i. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their infrastructure and their readiness and ability to implement the proposed project in a successful and timely manner. (3 points) ii. Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (4 points)
8) Partnerships (10 points)	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well the applicant has demonstrated appropriate and necessary partnerships as described in Section IV.C.6.B.9, Partnership Information.
9) Past Performance (8 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their: i. past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement (4 points),

	ii. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement including whether they submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, (2 points) and iii. the extent and quality to which they adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not (2 points). Note: In evaluating applicants under these 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 application and you 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 you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

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

A panel or panels of EPA staff will review eligible applications for each track based on the appropriate Track One and Track Two evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A above, assign scores to each application, and develop a ranked list of the applications in each Track (i.e., Track One and Two) based on the evaluation scores received. The ranking list for each Track will be provided to the Regional Selection Official who makes the final funding decisions. Final funding decisions will then be made by the Regional Selection Official based on the evaluation conducted by the review panel(s) and may also take into account the following factors:

1. Geographic distribution of funds;
2. Diversity of projects;
3. Availability of funds;
4. The distribution of awards between Track One and Track Two; and
5. The similarity of the project to other projects already being funded by the EPA.

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

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found 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 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

Following EPA's evaluation of the applications, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by e-mail regarding their status. The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance nor is it a guarantee that an award will be made. The official notification of an award will be made by the Regional Grant Management Office.

Applicants are cautioned that only an 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 the EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA Award Official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms, which must be approved by the EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

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

1. Project components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each component;
3. Commitments for each component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with 40 CFR §35.115;
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and the EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the commitments;
6. Grant awardees will be expected to provide to the EPA project location information for any grant-funded project. The type of locational information (statewide, 8-digit hydrologic unit code, 12-digit hydrologic unit code, county, municipality, tribal land boundary, local wetland with borders defined by LAT/long points, etc.) will be determined by consultation with the EPA, and will be determined based on the geographic scale and intent of the project; and
7. In consultation with the EPA, grant awardees will be expected to provide to the EPA a breakdown of federal funds that will be spent by "project category" (i.e. the type of effort(s) that is being conducted). Project Categories can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-category-definitions.

A list of the successful applications will be posted at the EPA's Wetland Grant Database (http://ofmpub.epa.gov/apex/grts/f?p=101:101:8604647356901::NO:::). Additional information about this announcement, including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications, can be found at https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-category-definitions and Grants.gov.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

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

C. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted at a minimum annually and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the workplan consistent with 2 CFR § 200.328, Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance, and 40 CFR Part 45. This includes any problems, issues or difficulties encountered that may affect the quality requirements of the project. The recipient must indicate what if any corrective actions were taken. Award recipients will be required to submit the final report electronically and in hard copy and should include, in addition, a 1-2 page project summary. If travel assistance is provided to selected attendees to attend wetland meetings/training workshops, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the workshops.

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, 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 CONTACTS

Dertera Collins
Collins.dertera@epa.gov
Mailcode: WS-15J
Chicago, Illinois 60604

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL

QA/QC requirements may be applicable to these assistance agreements (see 2 CFR 1500.11). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. The EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Agency Contact (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

If project tasks include wetland mapping contact USFWS to facilitate production of a standards compliant dataset. All funded mapping projects for which the FGDG mapping standards, as described below, apply will be required to contact the USFWS NWI at Wetlands_Team@fws.gov prior to project initiation, and participate in the NWI QA/QC process to ensure that data are standards compliant.

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

B. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

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

C. WETLANDS MAPPING STANDARD

A national wetlands mapping standard was developed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) with input from dozens of federal agencies, and led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This data standard ensures a consistent, high quality national wetlands geospatial dataset necessary for informed wetland decision-making at the national, state and local scale. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget therefore requires that all wetlands mapping projects funded through the federal government comply with the FGDC wetland standards. (Non-federally funded wetlands mapping projects are also encouraged to comply with the standard). Standard compliant data will be added

to the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) geospatial dataset and displayed on the Wetlands Mapper (https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html).

Detailed information on the wetlands mapping standard, which includes mandatory use of the "Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States" can be found at: FGDC Wetland Mapping Standard. To facilitate production of a standards compliant dataset all funded projects for which the afore mentioned standards apply will be required to contact the USFWS NWI at Wetlands_Team@fws.gov prior to project initiation, and participate in the NWI QA/QC process to ensure that data are standards compliant. The feasibility of producing standards compliant data with a proposed budget will be considered when making grant awards. Typically, compliant data cannot be produced for less than 8 cents/acre. Please contact the USFWS if you have questions regarding the mapping standard or budget development (Wetlands_Team@fws.gov). Additional guidance on the creation of standards compliant wetlands mapping data can be found at the USFWS NWI Contributed Data page: http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Contributed-Data.html.