

FY21 Application Attachments Overview (from SN Appendix E)

Applicants for the FY21 [Exchange Network](#) Grant program must submit an application package to EPA by **11:59 PM Eastern on Friday, March 26, 2021**. Except as noted on [Page 83: 'Detailed Instructions for Submitting Applications'](#), applicants must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this funding opportunity based on the [grants.gov](#) instructions in this announcement.

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement (fillable forms can be obtained from <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grantee-forms>.) All packages must contain a cover letter, project narrative, and the applicable forms and attachments listed below in the 'overview of application materials.'

Overview of Application Materials:

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| (1) Cover Letter (use 'Other Attachments Form' to submit) | (see optional template here) |
| (2) Project Narrative Attachment Form | (see optional template here) |
| (3) Budget Narrative Attachment Form | (See optional template here) |
| (4) Application for Federal Assistance | (Standard Form (SF-424)) |
| (5) Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs | (SF-424A) |
| (6) Key Contacts Form | (EPA Form 5700-54) |
| (7) Pre-award Compliance Review Report | (EPA Form 4700-4) |

Additional Attachments (use 'Other Attachments Form' to submit), as applicable:

- (A) Personnel attachments, including staff resumes
- (B) Negotiated [Indirect Cost Rate Agreement](#)
- (C) Additional Information for [Inter-Tribal Consortium](#)
- (D) Formal [Project Partners](#):
 - Support Letter(s)
 - Roles & Responsibilities
 - Distribution of Funds
- (E) Formal [Project Mentor\(s\)](#):
 - Support Letter(s)
 - Roles & Responsibilities
 - Distribution of Funds
- (F) List of Prior Exchange Network [Assistance Agreements](#)

Please note that if your application is selected for award, and that award amount is over \$100,000, you are required to submit the form '[EPA Lobbying Form 6600-06](#)' to EN Program Manager Erika Beasley (Beasley.erika@epa.gov) upon receiving a tentative notification of award.

Additional guidance tools have been posted to the [Exchange Network website](#):

- An optional, fillable Cover Letter Template is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/file/cover-letter-overview-optional-template>
- An optional, fillable Project Narrative Template is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/file/project-narrative-overview-outline-tips-optional-template>
- An optional, fillable Budget Narrative Attachment Form Template is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/file/budget-narrative-attachment-form-overview-optional-template>

Though applicants are not required to follow these templates, they have been provided as a tool to help ensure that all required information is appropriately captured within each of these documents.

Cover Letter

The application must include a cover letter signed by an [authorized organizational representative \(AOR\)](#) who, by virtue of their position, is able to obligate staff time on the proposed project, which includes:

- Applicant information
- Project title
- [Type of assistance](#) requested (grant/[cooperative agreement](#)/ Performance Partnership Grant)
 - If a [Performance Partnership Grant](#) is preferred, state this clearly in the cover letter and include the relevant grant number if possible
- Proposed amount of grant (broken down into [direct funding](#) and [in-kind](#) assistance if relevant)
- Partners on the grant (if [applicable](#))
- Mentors on the grant (if [applicable](#))
- Brief project summary including a statement of project [goal\(s\)](#)
- Contact information for the project lead
- Signature of executive level [Authorized Organizational Representative \(AOR\)](#).

An optional cover letter template is available on the EN website ([click here](#)).

Project Narrative

Applicants must include a project narrative or work plan which describes their proposed project in detail and clearly addresses each grant scoring criterion as outlined on [Section V-A Evaluation Criteria](#). Grant review panels will score applications based on how well they meet these criteria.

Please note **the project narrative cannot exceed ten single-spaced pages in length**. Number each page of your workplan and note EPA grant reviewers will not review any work plan elements appearing after the tenth page.

Tips for Writing a Successful Project Narrative:

- Strive for clear and succinct language-

Applicants should address each section of the project narrative in detail. The use of clear and concise language is highly recommended to ensure the best comprehension and scoring by EPA program staff and grant reviewers.

- Include headers for each of the eight project narrative sections-

To allow for easy review panel navigation throughout the project narrative, applicants are requested to include the section header in bold font above the section text in size 11 or 12 font.

- Use standard margins and fonts-

Applications should use 11-point fonts, apart from section headers and the proposal title, which may be increased to size 12. Please use 1-inch margins and single line spacing.

- Limit the Terminology to “Goals, Outputs and Outcomes”-

For improved clarity and consistency, applicants are requested to use the terms “[goals](#)”, “[outputs](#)”, and “[outcomes](#)” in their project narratives. The use of synonyms such as “objectives”, “targets”, “tasks” or “milestones” is often confusing for reviewers and makes it more difficult to properly score applications.

The Project Narrative must include the following sections, in this order:

1. Project Description

The purpose of this section is to help reviewers better understand what is being proposed. Applicants should include a brief description of the applicant's organization and scope of work, name the EN Funding Area(s) and funding opportunit(ies) that the applicant is applying under, provide an overview of the major [outputs](#) and [outcomes](#) to be accomplished in the project, and explain how the proposed project will address the applicant's business and/or administrative need(s). Applicants should also generally describe how the proposed project activities support one or more EN Funding Areas (see [Section I-B](#) and the title pages of Appendices [A](#), [B](#), and [C](#).)

2. Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes

The purpose of this section is to state the project's support of [EPA Strategic Goal 3, Objective 3.4 'Streamline and Modernize'](#) and to establish the proposed project's alignment with specific language found under this strategic objective. Applicants should also detail how their project supports other EPA strategic [goals](#), as applicable, and list anticipated environmental results in terms of well-defined project [outputs](#) and [outcomes](#) (see [Section 1-C](#)).

Applicants should also provide a detailed project plan in this section, with affiliated costs and deadlines, so that applicants can track and report on their project's progress. This project plan should be broken down by **each** project goal and its cost; all associated [output](#)(s), output cost(s), and output scheduled completion dates; outcome(s) affiliated with that goal; and the business and/or administrative need(s) which will be addressed by that specific goal.

Applicants may provide their detailed project plan using the optional table template found on Page 2 of the optional project narrative template (available on the EN website [here](#)), but it is not required.

3. Programmatic Involvement and Mentor Support

Any proposed projects that involve the management of, transport of or access to programmatic data must involve the program which owns the data in a substantial way to ensure that the Program's data and IT management requirements are met. The purpose of this section is for the applicant to name that program, its relationship to the applicant, and project roles and responsibilities. The name and details of at least one key person from the programmatic office should be included in the next section: 'Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Key Personnel' (see [Section 4](#) below).

If an applicant's project does not include programmatic involvement the applicant should explicitly state there will be no programmatic involvement and detail why this was deemed not applicable and/or necessary for the proposed grant project.

Applicants applying specifically under the '[Individual Capacity Building with Mentorship](#)' opportunity should also name their mentoring organization in this section and detail the mentor's involvement with the Exchange Network. Applicants should list at least one EN grant successfully completed by the mentor and verify that they currently report or publishes data for one or more environmental programs using an EN [node](#), [VES](#), or [APIs](#). The name and details of at least one key person from the mentoring organization should be included in the next section: 'Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Key Personnel' (see [Section 4](#) below). Additionally, mentorship costs should be detailed in [Section 7: Overview of Project Budget](#).

4. Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Key Personnel

The purpose of this section is to list the key personnel who are going to work on the project and detail their current organization and job title, their proposed project role(s) and responsibilities, and the relevant qualifications/past experiences which qualify them for the role.

Applicants should provide the name and include the above details for **the project manager**, at least one **programmatic participant** (if applicable, see [Section 3](#) above), and any formal **partner(s)** and formal **mentor(s)**, if applicable. The project manager's current job role/responsibilities and any prior experience they have had working in project management and financial management (e.g. working with a set budget) should also be noted.

In the case of an applicant who proposes to use a portion of this grant to hire key personnel, applicants should explicitly state that this role has not yet been hired for and detail the future person's project title, necessary qualifications/experience, and the project roles/responsibilities.

Applicants utilizing **technology vendors** and/or **contractors** should clearly state this and outline their project roles and responsibilities. Applicants should also include the name of the **contract vehicle** (if known), describe the method of acquisition, and detail the way the applicant will vet/has vetted the contractor/vendor to ensure they are qualified to complete the work as assigned.

5. Commitment to Reuse

Applicants should not spend grant funds on tools already developed and available for EN partners. The purpose of this section is for the applicant to clearly identify which **existing** project-appropriate tools and shared services will be incorporated into the project. Applicants should refer to [Appendix D](#) to find a list of resources for identifying tools and services for reuse. If no products have been identified, applicants should clearly state this and explain **in detail** why this is the case.

Applicants must also include a statement which explicitly **commits to register** any new tools/IT components developed as part of the project **and** explicitly **commits to register** the reuse of any tools/IT components as part of the grant close-out process once the project is completed.

6. Technical Understanding and Data Availability

The purpose of this section is for the applicant to demonstrate that they and/or their partners have the technical understanding to perform the proposed work and that the data and/or IT management solutions as identified are appropriate for the project. This section should also address how the proposed project will enhance data sharing and data availability for the applicant and among Exchange Network partners.

Applicants should identify and provide a brief description for each data/IT management/technological solution they will be utilizing in their project. For each solution identified, applicants should also detail why this technology is appropriate for the project, which business/administrative need(s) it helps to meet, and why the applicant feels confident in their ability to successfully implement and maintain the solution.

If specific solutions and/or technological aspects of the project are not yet known (e.g. if the applicant is using a contractor), applicants should state this clearly and describe who will make the project's technical decisions, why the applicant feels they are qualified/the appropriate party, and which business/administrative needs the selected technology or solutions will need to address.

Applicants should also identify how their proposed technical solution(s) align with the three principles of the E-Enterprise Digital Strategy ([EEDS](#)) and clearly explain their plan for implementing these principles within their project.

Applicants should also detail in this section how the knowledge, data, or technology [outputs](#) developed during their proposed project will enhance data sharing and availability for the applicant's organization, any immediate stakeholders (e.g. [formal partners](#)), and other organizations in the [Exchange Network](#). Applicants should also detail in this section how the knowledge, data, or technology outputs developed during their proposed project will enhance data sharing/availability specifically in the context of implementing the three E-Enterprise Digital Strategy ([EEDS](#)) principles, including leveraging [APIs](#).

NOTE: The three principles of the EEDS include the 'Information Centric Approach', the 'Shared Platform Approach', and the 'Customer Centric Approach'; click [here](#) to access the full text.

7. Overview of Project Budget

Applicants should have already identified budget amounts for each [goal](#) and each [output](#) within the Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes section (see [Section 2](#) above). The purpose of this section is for applicants to explain why the proposed budget amounts are appropriate and how they relate to the budget estimates provided in this Solicitation Notice within each funding opportunity write-up. For any project goals and outputs which do not have cost estimates or for any projects whose goals or outputs exceed the provided EPA estimates, a detailed cost rationale explaining how these estimates were calculated and why this estimate was deemed appropriate must be included.

Applicants should also list and explain pertinent budgetary information, including (as applicable):

- [Direct grants funding](#) vs. [in-kind support](#)
- Breakdown of funds for primary grantee vs. funds for [project partners](#)
- [Contractual](#) costs
- [Mentorship](#) costs
- [Indirect costs](#) with the associated [ICR rate](#) and expiration date
- Amount requested in [equipment](#)
- Amount requested in [supplies](#)
- Travel costs and each travel destination, traveler name, and cost per participant

8. Past Performance

Applicants should clearly indicate in this section whether they have received a prior [Exchange Network](#) grant (or grants) or explicitly state that they have never received an EN grant.

Additionally, applicants should list any tools, resources, services and/or dataflows produced by EN grant funds since 2011 that were [successfully registered](#) in [RCS/ENDS/SSRC](#) at the time of grant close out. The associated grant number and fiscal year should also be provided for each registered component.

NOTE: An optional, fillable project narrative template is available on the EN Website [here](#).

Mandatory Grant Attachments:

- 1) **[Cover Letter](#)** (use ‘Other Attachments Form’ to submit; see optional, fillable template [here](#))
- 2) **[Project Narrative Attachment Form](#)** (see optional, fillable template [here](#))
- 3) **Budget Narrative Attachment Form** (see optional, fillable template [here](#))
 - This form is used to attach your budget narrative document.
 - Please note that the document submitted under this form is separate from the [Project Narrative](#).
 - This budget narrative is required to help the grants office process the award, should the project be selected.
 - Please note that applicants must not include [management fees](#) or similar charges in excess of the [direct costs](#) and [indirect costs](#) in their project budgets.
- 4) **Application for Federal Assistance ([SF 424](#))**
 - Complete the form.
 - Please note 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.
 - Please include the county/parish in the applicant address on line 8(d).
 - Please note that congressional district should be 2-digit code on line 16(a).
 - Please list the project start date as October 1, 2021 and use the entire project period of performance, with an end date of September 30, 2024 on line 17(a & b).
- 5) **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs ([SF-424A](#))**
 - Complete the form.
 - Total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A.
 - Total amount of [direct costs](#) should be shown on line 6(i) and on line 21.
 - The [indirect cost rate](#) (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits) and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
 - See the ‘Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement’ section [on page 81](#) for more details
 - Note that the numbers and totals depicted on this form **must** exactly match those depicted on the Budget Narrative Attachment form (see #3 above).
 - Please do not include monetary amounts less than one dollar (round all budget items to the nearest whole number).
- 6) **Key Contacts Form ([EPA Form 5700-54](#))**
 - Complete the form.
- 7) **Pre-Award Compliance Review Report ([EPA Form 4700-4](#))**
 - Complete the form

Additional Attachments, as applicable:

Use the 'Other Attachment Form' to submit the following documents, as applicable:

1) Personnel Attachments:

- Include biographical sketches or resumes of the lead and any partner Project Manager(s).
 - Each biographical sketch should outline the education, work history and knowledge/expertise of the individual managing the proposed project.
 - For applicants who propose to use funding from this grant to hire key personnel and/or the project manager only -- submit a statement of knowledge, skills, abilities and qualifications from the recruitment package for the position.

2) Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

This is required for any applicants charging indirect costs.

- **Indirect costs (IDCs) may be budgeted and charged by recipients of Federal [assistance agreements](#) in accordance with [2 CFR Part 200](#). EPA's [Indirect Cost Policy for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements](#) (IDC Policy) implements the Federal regulations, and the following applies to all EPA assistance agreements, unless there are [statutory or regulatory limits on IDCs](#).**
- For an assistance agreement recipient to use EPA funding for indirect costs, the IDC category of the recipient's assistance agreement award budget must include an amount for IDCs and at least one of the following must apply:
- Except for "exempt" agencies and Institutions of Higher Education as noted below, all recipients must have one of the following current (not expired) IDC rates, including IDC rates that have been extended by the cognizant agency:
 - Provisional;
 - Final;
 - Fixed rate with carry-forward;
 - Predetermined;
 - 10% [de minimus](#) rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f)
 - EPA-approved use of one of the following:
 - 10% [de minimus](#) as detailed in section 6.3 of the IDC Policy; or
 - Expired fixed rate with carry-forward as detailed in section 6.4.a. of the IDC Policy.
- "Exempt" state or local governmental departments or agencies are agencies that receive up to and including \$35,000,000 in Federal funding per the department or agency's fiscal year, and must have an IDC rate proposal developed in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Appendix VII](#), with documentation maintained and available for audit.
- Institutions of Higher Education must use the IDC rate in place at the time of award for the life of the assistance agreement (unless the rate was provisional at time of award, in which case the rate will change once it becomes final). As provided by [2 CFR Part 200, Appendix III\(C\)\(7\)](#), the term "life of the assistance agreement", means each competitive segment of the project. Additional information is available in the regulation.
- IDCs incurred during any period of the assistance agreement that are not covered by the provisions above are not allowable costs and must not be drawn down by the recipient. Recipients may budget for IDCs pending approval of their IDC rate by the cognizant Federal agency or an exception granted by EPA under section 6.3 or 6.4 of the IDC Policy. However, recipients may not draw down IDCs until their rate is approved or EPA grants an exception.

- The IDC Policy does not govern indirect rates for subrecipients or recipient procurement contractors under EPA assistance agreements. Pass-through entities are required to comply with [2 CFR 200.331\(a\)\(4\)](#) when establishing [indirect cost rates](#) for [subawards](#).
- See the [Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for additional information.

3) Additional Information for Inter-Tribal Consortium:

This is required for any [inter-tribal consortia](#) applying for an Exchange Network grant

- Inter-tribal consortia applicants must include attachment(s) showing:
 - A formal partnership exists among the Tribal governments' members of the inter-tribal consortium and the majority of the members are federally recognized Indian tribes
 - The consortiums federally recognized tribal members have authorized the consortium to apply for and receive assistance from the EN Grant Program.

4) Formal Project Partners – Roles and Responsibilities and Distribution of Funds:

This is required for any projects with [formal partners](#) requesting over \$200,000 in grant funds

- If the proposed project involves formal project partners who will actively participate in implementing the project, provide a description of the roles and responsibilities of each partner in carrying out each of the project [goals](#).
 - Describe how the recipient would coordinate work among the partners using methods such as regular teleconferences, meetings or written status reports.
 - If the recipient plans to distribute funding to partners, describe the method for doing so.
 - Provide letter(s) of support confirming partner participation in the proposed grant
- EN grant projects including one or more formal partners can have budgets up to \$400,000, if the partnership eligibility criteria outlined in [Section III-D](#) is met.
- Partnerships formed from within a single state, territorial or tribal government (e.g., a “partnership” limited to the Environment and Public Health Departments within a state) are not eligible partnerships and are limited to the \$200,000 maximum funding

5) Formal Project Mentors – Roles and Responsibilities and Distribution of Funds:

This is required for any projects with formal mentors applying under [‘Individual Capacity Building with Mentorship’](#)

- If the proposed project involves formal project mentors who will actively participate in the project, provide a description of the mentoring activities and support:
 - Describe how the recipient would coordinate with the mentor using methods such as regular teleconferences, meetings or written status reports.
 - If the recipient plans to distribute funding to mentors, describe the method for doing so.
 - Provide a letter of support confirming project participation by the mentoring organization
- EN grant projects including a formal mentor can have budgets up to \$215,000, of which up to \$15,000 can be allocated to mentorship costs

6) List of Prior Exchange Network [Assistance Agreements](#):

This is required for any applicants who have received prior Exchange Network [grants](#)

- Provide a list of previously awarded assistance agreements since 2002.