



# **Water Quality Benefits** **Informational Webinar for Applicants**

**EPA STAR RFA**

**December 15, 2021**

- Review application information for the EPA STAR RFA:  
“WATER QUALITY BENEFITS”
- Provide guidance for eligibility, submission, technical aspects of application process
- Answer questions about the application process

Read the RFA very carefully, all necessary information is provided



## Webinar Ground Rules

- Please hold your questions until all EPA presentations have been made.
- You may type your questions in the comments box. 
- No specific research project or idea can be discussed but clarifying questions regarding what is written in the RFA announcement may be answered.
- These slides are posted on the RFA webpage.
- Please keep yourself muted during the presentation. 



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## RFA & Award Information

- Estimated Number of Awards: 7
- Anticipated Federal Funding Amount: \$742,000 per award
  - Proposed federal budget must not exceed this amount
- Project Period of 3 years
- RFA will close on: **January 26, 2022: 11:59:59 pm Eastern Time**



## Research Areas:

1. **Research Area 1** – National Level Studies and/or Valuation for Underrepresented Water Body Types and Regions
2. **Research Area 2** – Improving Water Quality Indices
3. **Research Area 3** – Environmental Justice Valuation: Physical Characteristics and Geography
4. There are **three** distinct research areas. EPA encourages applicants to focus on only one research area so that applications have the detail necessary to fully address one research area.
  1. Applications that address more than one research area will not be deemed ineligible but will not necessarily be rated more highly than those that address just one.
  2. Applications should indicate which research area is being addressed and may respond to portions or all of one research area.

## National Level Studies and/or Valuation for Underrepresented Water Body Types and Regions

### Topics of Interest:

- How can national-level studies advance knowledge of the effect that differences in spatial scales have on water quality benefits?
- What underrepresented regions and water body types require further study?
- Does WTP differ between iconic and non-iconic water bodies?
- What is the estimation of the extent of market/WTP distance decay? Extent of market?
- How does WTP differ between the local and regional scale?
- How can other valuation methods and studies be cross-validated to provide more accurate estimates?

# Improving Water Quality Indices (WQIs)

### Topics of Interest:

- What new sub-indices can be constructed or updated to directly link water quality parameters to measurable water quality attributes that people value?
- What connections between sub-indices and designated uses can be developed such as primary contact, recreation/swimming, fishing, and boating?
- Can sets of water quality parameters be included in a WQI to reflect parameters currently used to measure ambient water quality?
- How can water quality problems such as harmful algal blooms be better incorporated into a WQI?



## Research Area 3

### Environmental Justice Valuation: Physical Characteristics and Geography.

#### Topics of Interest:

- How are benefits to subsistence fishing such as catch-rate and fishery health affected by improvements in water quality?
- What are the non-use benefits associated with being a good steward of water quality for all members of society?
- What are the benefits from water quality improvements to population groups of concern that reduce disproportionate exposure impacts (e.g., health)?
- How can reduced cumulative health risks related to improved water quality be incorporated into water-based benefits analysis?



## Environmental Justice (Research Area 3 only)

**For Research Area 3**, applicants should add a section describing how they will advance environmental justice as described in section 1.D. of the RFA. This includes:

- Demonstrating how the project will address the disproportionate and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts.
- Demonstrating how the project benefits underserved communities.
- Note that peer reviewers will be evaluating this aspect of your application (please see pg. 47 of the RFA).

- **All applicants need to include a description describing how their project shifts current research or engineering paradigms by using innovative theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions applicable to one or more fields of research as described in Section I.C.**
- **Peer reviewers will be reviewing this section.**



## Example Outputs

Outputs should address how the research results will lead to solutions to environmental problems and improve the public's ability to protect the environment and human health.

Examples include:

- Reports and peer reviewed publications
- Workshops and webinars to disseminate information
- Guidance documents
- Decision support tools and/or models
- Demonstrations and case studies
- Detailed study documentation to support benefit transfer
- New approaches, methods, and results improving understanding of environmental justice and how to tie it to the measurement of water quality benefits
- Suggestions of water quality parameters to include in WQIs and information on impacts on water quality

Please note that outputs should follow best practices for study reporting to ensure the results support benefit transfers or meta-analyses and decision making.



## Expected Outcomes

- An improved understanding of how the extent of the market varies nationally and by waterbody type and size
- An improved understanding of how individuals value water quality, in terms of step versus incremental functions
- An improved understanding of the distribution of benefits and costs
- Improved facilitation of cross-disciplinary research focusing on the value of water quality improvements efforts to reduce institutional barriers and improve public acceptance and
- A larger pool of suitable study cases that support benefit transfers or meta-analyses



# Eligibility Information

## Eligible to Apply (Section III. Eligibility Information)

Public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations

Public and private institutions of higher education

Hospitals located in the U.S. and its territories, possessions

State and local governments, U.S. territories or possessions

Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments

Foreign collaborators, data collection or use are OK

- International Budget needs to be justified, reviewed, and approved



## Application Materials and Process

- **Section IV. Application And Submission Information** of the RFA
- To apply under this solicitation, use the application package available at **Grants.gov**
- For further submission information see: **RFA Section IV.F.** “Submission Instructions and other Submission Requirements”
- Note: All necessary forms are included in the electronic application package, with the exception of the current and pending support form, available at: **Research Funding Opportunities: How to Apply and Required Forms**

**Make sure to include the current and pending support form as part of the Project Narrative of your Grants.gov submission**

Please refer to the following RFA sections for additional Information:

### IV. Application And Submission Information

- Required application package materials including:
  - EPA Human Subjects Research Statement (HSRS)
  - Scientific Data Management Plan (SDMP)

### V. Application Review Information

- Peer Review Criteria
- Relevancy Review Criteria



## Agency Contacts



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**Interested in becoming a Peer Reviewer?**

Contact Aaron Wishnuff ([wishnuff.aaron@epa.gov](mailto:wishnuff.aaron@epa.gov))

**Thank you!**