

**AGENCY:** ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)  
**TITLE:** Solid Waste Infrastructure For Recycling (SWIFR) Grant Program for Political Subdivisions of States and Territories.

**ACTION:** Request for Applications (RFA)

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:** EPA-I-OLEM-ORCR-23-03

**Assistance Listing No:** 66.920

**KEY DATES:**

<b>Nov. 14, 2022</b>	RFA OPENS
<b>Dec. 5 and 7, 2022</b>	INFORMATION SESSION SERIES #1
<b>Dec. 13 and 19, 2022</b>	INFORMATION SESSION SERIES #2
<b>Jan. 16, 2023</b>	RFA CLOSSES – APPLICATIONS DUE BY 11:59 PM (EST)
<b>April 2023</b>	ANTICIPATED NOTIFICATION OF FUNDING SELECTION
<b>Oct. 2023</b>	ANTICIPATED AWARD

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Application packages must be submitted electronically to the EPA through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)) no later than **January 16, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. (EST)** in order to be considered for funding.

To allow for efficient management of the competitive process, the EPA requests submittal of an informal Notice of Intent to Apply by **December 15, 2022** to [SWIFR@epa.gov](mailto:SWIFR@epa.gov). Please include your approximate funding amount, the track under which you are applying (refer to *Section I.F: Program Tracks* for more information), and one to two sentences about the scope of your project. Submission of an Intent to Apply is optional; it is a process management tool that will allow the EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted applications.

**Note** - Prior to naming a contractor (including consultants) or subrecipient in your application as a “partner”, please carefully review Appendix A of [EPA’s Contracts and Subawards Solicitation Clause](#) that are incorporated by reference in this announcement (refer to *Section III.D: Named Contractors and Subrecipients*). EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements as well as EPA’s rule on Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in EPA Programs in 40 CFR Part 33. The Agency does not accept justifications for sole source contracts for services or products available in the commercial marketplace based on a contractor’s role in preparing an application or prior relationships with the contractor that were not established in compliance with competitive procurement requirements. Note that these competitive procurement requirements apply with equal force to contractual relationships established prior to or after the award of EPA funds.

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## **SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Background**

Approximately half of global greenhouse gas emissions are the result of natural resource extraction and processing.<sup>1</sup> Increasing recycling reduces climate, environmental, and social impacts of materials use, and keeps valuable resources in use instead of in landfills. Municipal solid waste management has long suffered from a lack of investment. Some communities that lack waste management infrastructure do not have curbside waste collection services, recycling, or composting programs, which increases the burden on our landfills, decreases their capacity, and increases greenhouse gas emissions. For example, more than one-third (nearly 100 million tons) of the U.S. municipal waste stream is organic waste. The production and current management of organics contributes to a broad range of environmental impacts, including climate change, air pollutants, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and soil and water quality degradation. For example, producing, grading, packing, processing, distributing, retailing, and preparing the amount of food that is currently wasted annually in the U.S. contributes greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions equivalent to that of 42 coal-fired power plants and requires enough water and energy to supply more than 50 million homes each year.<sup>2</sup> When food waste and other organics go to the landfill, they release methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. In 2020, 14.5% of human-related methane emissions came from landfills.<sup>3</sup> Mismanaged waste also can compound health, economic, and undesirable social conditions in historically underserved and overburdened communities.

To reduce the impacts of materials and strengthen the U.S. recycling system, the EPA and others have undertaken significant efforts to advance the circular economy in the United States. In 2015, the EPA and USDA announced the [U.S. 2030 Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal](#), seeking to cut food loss and waste in half by the year 2030. In 2020, the EPA announced the [National Recycling Goal](#) to increase the U.S. recycling rate to 50 percent by 2030 and to galvanize efforts to strengthen the U.S. recycling system. One year later, the EPA released the [National Recycling Strategy: Part One of a Series on Building a Circular Economy for All](#), the same day that funding was made available to support the strategy when the [2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\)](#) was signed into law. The National Recycling Strategy proposes building a circular economy to reduce material use, redesign materials to be less resource intensive, and recapturing “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products. This vision and strategy for a circular economy aligns with the language and the goals identified in the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act regarding solid waste infrastructure and management in the United States.

The Solid Waste for Infrastructure (SWIFR) grant program funded through the BIL is an historic investment in the health, equity, and resilience of American communities. The unprecedented funding provided by the BIL through the SWIFR grants will assist local waste management authorities by supporting improvements to local post-consumer materials management, including municipal recycling programs, and assisting local waste management authorities in making improvements to local waste management systems. The SWIFR grant program provides a critical opportunity to fund a range of high-

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<sup>1</sup> Data from the 2019 Global Resources Outlook Report published by UN Environment.

<https://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook>

<sup>2</sup> More information available in the EPA’s 2021 Report titled From Farm to Kitchen: The Environmental Impacts of Food Waste (Part 1), available at [https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-11/from-farm-to-kitchen-the-environmental-impacts-of-u.s.-food-waste\\_508-tagged.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-11/from-farm-to-kitchen-the-environmental-impacts-of-u.s.-food-waste_508-tagged.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/lmop/frequent-questions-about-landfill-gas#:~:text=MSW%20landfills%20are%20the%20third,use%20a%20significant%20energy%20resource.>

impact projects to increase recycling, reduce contamination, and promote a circular economy for sustainable materials management by making much-needed investments in solid waste management infrastructure.

The SWIFR Grant Program is a covered program under the Justice40 Initiative, which aims to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, clean water, and other investments to disadvantaged communities. More information on Justice40 at the EPA can be found at: [www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40-epa](http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40-epa).

There are three types of grants within the SWIFR program, which are designed to fund a range of projects that will enable EPA to help states, territories, tribes, local governments, and communities advance from “where they are” to significantly transform their recycling and materials management infrastructure.

1. **SWIFR Grants for States and Territories** will provide states and territories with capacity building grants to support their long-term planning and data collection needs to demonstrate progress toward the National Recycling Goal and Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal and advance a Circular Economy for materials. Territories also will be able to utilize funds for equipment and construction related costs as part of their implementation of plans.
2. **SWIFR Grants for Tribes and Intertribal Consortia** will provide funds for tribes and intertribal consortia to develop or update plans focused on encouraging environmentally sound post-consumer materials management; establish, increase, or expand materials management infrastructure, and identify, establish, or improve end-markets for the use of recycled materials.
3. **SWIFR Grants for Political Subdivisions** will establish, increase, expand, or optimize collection and improve materials management infrastructure; reduce contamination in the recycled materials stream; and identify, establish, or improve end-markets for the use of recycled materials.

This RFA is for the SWIFR sub-grant program for Political Subdivisions. This RFA is only applicable to the first round of funding described under this document and does not pertain to the entire three-year grant program. The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$40,000,000. The EPA anticipates awarding approximately 25 assistance agreements, with at least one award per EPA Region, depending on the quality of applications received. The minimum individual award amount is \$500,000 and the maximum individual award is \$4,000,000 for the grant period, which is up to three years. Refer to *Section II: Award Information* of this announcement for more information. In alignment with the [Biden Administration’s Justice40 Initiative](#), up to 40%, or \$16,000,000, of the benefits, which in this program is defined as investments, will be set-aside specifically for awards to disadvantaged communities (refer to *Section III.A: Eligible Applicants* for more information).

Materials and waste streams considered under this announcement include: municipal solid waste (MSW), including plastics, organics, paper, metal, glass, etc. and construction and demolition (C&D) debris. In addition, materials and waste streams considered include the management pathways of source reduction, reuse, sending materials to material recovery facilities, composting, industrial uses (e.g., rendering, anaerobic digestion (AD)), and feeding animals.

## B. Statutory/Regulatory Authority Criteria

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), provides \$275,000,000 for grants authorized under Section 302(a) “Post-Consumer Materials Management Infrastructure Grant Program” of the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act ([Public Law 116-224](#)) as codified at 33 U.S.C. 4282(a). The BIL funds will be available to EPA at \$55,000,000 per year from Fiscal Year 2022 to Fiscal Year 2026. Congress appropriated an additional \$2,500,000 for grants authorized under Section 302(a) of Save Our Seas Act 2.0 in EPA’s Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriation Act ([Public Law 117-103](#)).

Pursuant to Section 302(a) of the Save Our Seas Act 2.0, the SWIFR grant program must:

- Implement the series of strategies on building a circular economy for all;
- Support improvements to local post-consumer materials management, including municipal recycling programs; and
- Assist local waste management authorities in making improvements to local waste management systems.

## C. Key Definitions

**Circular economy:** As defined in the Save Our Seas Act 2.0, the term means an economy that uses a systems-focused approach and involves industrial processes and economic activities that are restorative or regenerative by design; enable resources used in such processes and activities to maintain their highest values for as long as possible; and aim for the elimination of waste through the superior design of materials, products, and systems (including business models). A circular economy is embraced within the sustainable materials management (SMM) approach that the United States federal government has pursued since 2009.

**Coalitions:** Groups of two or more eligible applicants (political subdivisions of states) may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity **must** be responsible for the grant. Coalitions **must** identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subrecipients of the recipient (the “pass-through entity”). *Subawards must* be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR 200.1 and comply with the [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#). The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to the EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 CFR 200.332, subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for proper use of EPA funding. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 CFR 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants. Refer to the [Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. **Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a “partner” or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements.**

**Disadvantaged community:** Under this announcement, a disadvantaged community is defined as a community that meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. is located in a U.S. Territory (Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands);
2. meets one or more of the eight disadvantaged categories identified in the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST) developed by the Council on Environmental Quality;
3. is a Census-defined rural community that is at or above the 65th percentile for low income AND 80% or more of individuals 15 or older are not enrolled in higher education; or
4. is located in Indian country, is a former Indian reservation in Oklahoma (as determined by the Secretary of the Interior), or is an Alaskan Native Villages as defined in Public Law 92–203.

EPA has different tools available to help determine whether a community meets this definition. For example:

- Under criterion 2, an applicant can use a screenshot of CEJST along with a brief narrative to illustrate that the proposed project will benefit a disadvantaged community.
- Under criterion 3, an applicant can use screenshots of the map in this link (<https://www.epa.gov/rcra/grants-political-subdivisions>) along with a brief narrative to illustrate that their proposed project will benefit disadvantaged communities. Areas that are eligible are highlighted in blue. Applicants may use their street address, city, or ZIP code to search and should take a screenshot to demonstrate that they are located in or their project will benefit a rural area.

If you are unable to use the resources mentioned above or have other technical issues when determining eligibility, please email [SWIFR@epa.gov](mailto:SWIFR@epa.gov) for assistance.

**Environmental justice (EJ):** The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

**Political subdivisions:** Local governments are generally political subdivisions of states and differ from state and federal governments in that their authority is not based directly on a constitution. Each state constitution or other law describes in detail a procedure for establishing local governments as political subdivisions. In most cases the state legislature must approve the creation or incorporation of a local government. The local government then receives a charter defining its organization, authority and responsibilities, including the means for electing governing officials. Local government units bear a variety of names, such as city, county, township, village, parish, district, etc. The legal significance of

these terms may vary from state to state. The authority of local governments varies greatly. Generally, a local government has the authority to:

- Impose taxes
- Try people accused of breaking local laws or ordinances
- Administer local programs within its boundaries

Depending on state law, political subdivisions may include other types of entities including those identified in the definition of *Local government* at 2 CFR 200.1 and state institutions of higher education.

**Post-consumer materials management:** As defined in the Save Our Seas Act 2.0, the term refers to the systems, operation, supervision and long-term management of processes and equipment used for post-use material (including packaging, goods, products, and other materials), including collection; transport; and systems and processes related to post-use materials that can be recovered, reused, recycled, repaired, or refurbished.

When considering post-consumer materials management, it is important to include municipal solid waste (MSW), including plastics, food, paper, metal, glass, etc., and construction and demolition (C&D) debris), as well as the management pathways of source reduction and reuse, sending materials to material recovery facilities, composting, industrial uses (e.g., rendering and anaerobic digestion (AD)), and feeding animals.

#### **D. Program Vision and Goals**

This RFA has the following goals:

- Fund a range of projects that will help local governments and communities advance from “where they are” to significantly transform their post-consumer materials management infrastructure.
- Fund projects that will result in a significant decrease in the generation of MSW and/or an increase in the diversion of MSW from landfills and incineration.
- Fund innovative solutions and programs that provide or increase access to prevention, reuse, mechanical recycling, anaerobic digestion, and composting.

This program aims to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, clean water, and other investments to disadvantaged communities. More information on Justice40 at the EPA can be found

at: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40-epa>.

#### **E. Project Labor Agreements**

The EPA encourages project labor agreements (i.e., pre-hire collective bargaining agreements between unions and contractors that govern terms and conditions of employment for all workers on a construction project); the use of an appropriately trained workforce (i.e., through registered apprenticeships and other joint labor-management training programs that serve all workers, particularly those historically excluded); the use of an appropriately credentialed workforce (i.e., requirements for appropriate and relevant professional training, certification, and licensure); and neutrality with respect to union organizing (i.e., BIL funds should not support or oppose union organizing).

## F. Program Tracks

Under this RFA, EPA will fund projects under two tracks:

- **Track 1:** Projects that benefit disadvantaged communities as defined under *Section I.C: Key Definitions* of this RFA. EPA anticipates that approximately 40% (or \$16,000,000) of the funding will be awarded to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.
- **Track 2:** Projects that benefit all other communities that do not meet the definition of disadvantaged communities as defined under *Section I.C: Key Definitions* of this RFA.

Applications must clearly indicate if the proposed project(s) fall under Track 1 or Track 2. To qualify for Track 1, applications must demonstrate that the proposed project or project(s) will benefit a community that meets the definition of disadvantaged community as defined under *Section I.C: Key Definitions* of this RFA. EPA has different tools available to help determine whether a community meets this definition. For example, an application can include a screenshot of CEJST along with a brief narrative to illustrate that the proposed project will benefit disadvantaged communities. EPA reserves the right to determine under which track the application falls under based on the justification provided in the application.

There is no cost match requirement associated with this grant program.

## G. Scope of Work

The EPA is soliciting applications for a wide variety of projects that are designed to build and transform solid waste infrastructure in the United States to equitably reduce waste and manage materials to achieve a circular economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create cleaner, resilient, and healthier communities. It is anticipated that projects will enable the EPA to help eligible partners advance from “where they are” to significantly transform their post-consumer materials management infrastructure. Projects will create new capacity for, optimize existing capacity of, or identify strategies that result in an increase in management of post-consumer materials. The EPA also recognizes and encourages applications that demonstrate innovative solutions and programs that provide or increase access to prevention, reuse, recycling, anaerobic digestion, and composting opportunities in areas that currently do not have access.

In addition, the EPA is seeking post-consumer materials management projects that address environmental justice concerns and focus predominantly on addressing the disproportionate and adverse (see below) human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

All applications must address one or more of the following objectives, as they relate to the track under which the application is applying:

- Establish, increase, expand, or optimize collection and improve materials<sup>4</sup> management infrastructure<sup>5</sup>;
- Fund the creation and construction of tangible infrastructure, technology, or other improvements to reduce contamination in the recycled materials stream;
- Establish, increase, expand, or optimize capacity for materials management;
- Establish, improve, expand, or optimize end-markets for the use of recycled commodities; or
- Demonstrate a significant and measurable increase in the diversion,<sup>6</sup> recycling rate,<sup>7</sup> and quality of materials collected for municipal solid waste.

Applications **may include (but are not limited to)** projects that fund:

- Innovative solutions and/or programs that provide or increase access to prevention, reuse, and recycling in areas that currently do not have access; including development of and/or upgrades to drop-off and transfer stations (including but not limited to a hub-and-spoke model in rural communities), etc.
- The purchase of recycling equipment, including but not limited to sorting equipment, waste metering, trucks, processing facilities, etc.;
- Upgrades to material recovery facilities (MRFs) such as optical sorters, artificial intelligence, etc.;
- Development of and/or upgrades to composting facilities or anaerobic digesters to increase capacity for organics recycling;
- Development of and/or upgrades to curbside collection programs or drop-off stations for organics;
- Development of and/or upgrades to reuse infrastructure such as online reuse platforms, community repair spaces, technology and equipment to improve materials management reuse options, food donation, and upcycling, staging areas for material reuse/donation, reuse warehouses, and reuse centers, and electronic waste and computer recycling and refurbishing.
- Other activities that the applicant believes will further the objectives of the RFA.

## H. General Environmental Results and EPA Strategic Plan Information

Pursuant to Section 6.a. of EPA Order 5700.7A1, “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,” EPA must link proposed assistance agreements with the Agency’s Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see [EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements](#)).

The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the [FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#). Awards made under this solicitation will support the following goals and objectives of the [Strategic Plan](#).

- **Goal 1: Tackle the Climate Crisis;**
  - Objective 1.1: Reduce Emissions that Cause Climate Change

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<sup>4</sup> Materials and waste streams considered under SWIFR include: municipal solid waste (MSW), including plastics, organics, paper, metal, glass, etc., and construction and demolition (C&D) debris. In addition, materials and waste streams considered include the management pathways of source reduction, reuse, sending materials to material recovery facilities, composting, industrial uses (e.g., rendering, anaerobic digestion (AD)), and feeding animals.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of materials management infrastructure includes but is not limited to: recycling/composting facilities, secondary processing facilities, and other facilities that manage MSW.

<sup>6</sup> Measured in tons of material diverted from landfill disposal or incineration.

<sup>7</sup> As defined by the Modeling Recycling Program Toolkit, available on the [EPA’s website](#).

- Objective 1.3: Advance International and Subnational Climate Efforts
- **Goal 2: Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights;**
  - Objective 2.1: Promote Environmental Justice and Civil Rights at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Levels
  - Objective 2.2: Embed Environmental Justice and Civil Rights into the EPA’s Programs, Policies, and Activities
- **Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities;**
  - Objective 5.2: Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds
- **Goal 6: Safeguard and Revitalize Communities**
  - Objective 6.1: Clean Up and Restore Land for Productive Uses and Healthy Communities
  - Objective 6.2: Reduce Waste and Prevent Environmental Contamination

All applications must be for projects that support at least one of the goals and objectives identified above.

### **I. National Recycling Strategy Plan Linkage**

The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the [National Recycling Strategy](#) (NRS). Awards made under this solicitation will support the following objectives of the NRS:

- a) improve markets for recycled commodities,
- b) increase collection and improve materials management infrastructure,
- c) reduce contamination in the recycled materials stream,
- d) enhance policies and programs to support circularity, and
- e) standardize measurement and increase data collection.

### **J. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation**

Additional provisions that apply to *Section III: Eligibility Information*, *Section IV: Application and Submission Information*, *Section V: Application Review Information*, and *Section VI: Award Administration Information* of this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, can be found at the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These provisions are important for applying to this solicitation 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 contact the EPA point of contact listed in this solicitation (in *Section VII: Agency Contact*) to obtain the provisions.

### **K. Minority Serving Institutions**

Under the SOS 2.0 Act, entities eligible to apply for funding under this solicitation include political subdivisions of states. State colleges and universities, including those that are state Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), may be eligible for funding and must include in their applications proof of eligibility as an entity that is a political subdivision of the state. Examples of acceptable forms of proof include legal opinions from the state Attorney General or equivalent or from the Chief Legal Officer of the state college or university. Eligibility to apply for funding under this solicitation are discussed in more detail in *Section III.A: Eligible Applicants*.

The EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces. At the same time, the EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation

by including members of communities which may have not previously participated in such dialogues to participate in the EPA’s programs. For this reason, the EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in *Section III: Eligibility Information*, including minority serving institutions (MSIs), to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered MSIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#);
2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at [American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities](#);
3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at [Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#)
4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions](#); and
5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. § 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at [Predominately Black Institutions](#).

**L. Measuring and Reporting Environmental Results: Outputs and Outcomes**

Pursuant to [EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements](#), ” EPA requires that all grant applicants and recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature and in how they are measured. The EPA requires that all grant applicants and recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes.

**Outputs.** The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a specified period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

**Outcomes.** The term “outcome” means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature. Applications must include a description of anticipated project outcomes resulting from the project outputs, even if the outcome to be achieved is beyond the assistance agreement funding period. Include the quantitative target associated with the outcome, as appropriate.

Applicants must discuss the following environmental outputs and outcomes in the Project Narrative Application (see Appendix B). Grant recipients must report the following:

Activity Funded	Output/Outcome
Purchase, develop or enhance infrastructure; develop or enhance markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of infrastructure investments/enhancements made spanning the spectrum of collection through end market development (e.g., bins purchased, post-consumer materials management systems created, technology improvements made).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tons of MSW/C&amp;D collected, recycled, composted, or managed via other management pathways in the community in which the project serves.</li> <li>• Tons of MSW/C&amp;D generated per material type and source in the community in which the project serves (e.g., plastic and food waste).</li> <li>• Number of temporary or permanent jobs created</li> </ul>
Establish, increase, expand, or optimize collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tons of MSW/C&amp;D collected, recycled, composted, or managed via other management pathways in the community in which the project serves.</li> <li>• Tons of MSW/C&amp;D generated per material type and source in the community in which the project serves (e.g., plastic and food waste).</li> <li>• GHG reduced (in MTCO<sub>2</sub>e) from collection, recycling, composting or management via other management pathways</li> <li>• Number of temporary or permanent jobs created.</li> <li>• Percentage of political subdivisions served as a result of establishing, increasing, expanding, or optimizing collection.</li> <li>• Number of disadvantaged communities served (as defined by this solicitation) as a result of establishing, increasing, expanding, or optimizing collection.</li> </ul>

**M. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation**

Additional provisions that apply to sections III, IV, V, and VI of this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These provisions are important for applying to this solicitation 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 contact the EPA point of contact listed in this solicitation *Section VII: Agency Contact* to obtain the provisions.

## **SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. What is the amount of available funding?**

It is anticipated that approximately \$40,000,000 will be awarded under this announcement, depending on the availability of funds, quantity and quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations.

Additionally, because Justice40 sets a goal that 40% of program benefits flow to disadvantaged communities, which is defined in *Section I.C: Key Definitions* for the purposes of this RFA, the EPA expects to award approximately 40% of the total funding available, or \$16,000,000, to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

The EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards. The EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this solicitation, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

### **B. Funding Structure and Program Tracks**

The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$40,000,000. The EPA anticipates awarding at least one award per EPA Region, depending on the availability of funds, quantity and quality of the applications received, and other applicable considerations. The minimum individual award is \$500,000 and the maximum individual award is \$4,000,000 for the grant period, which is up to three years. Refer to *Section II: Award Information*, of this announcement for more information.

EPA has a goal of awarding up to 40%, or approximately \$16,000,000 to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities (refer to *Section I.F: Program Tracks* and *Section II.A: What is the amount of available funding?* for more information), depending on the quality of the applications received. There is no cost match requirement associated with this grant program.

### **C. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?**

The EPA anticipates awarding approximately 25 assistance agreements, with at least one award per EPA Region, depending on the quality of the applications received. The minimum individual award is \$500,000 and the maximum individual award is \$4,000,000 for the grant period, subject to availability of funds and the quality of eligible applications received. Applicants may submit separate applications for one or more of the projects described in *Section I.G: Scope of Work*.

### **D. Type of Award**

The EPA intends to award cooperative agreements under this solicitation. Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant(s) in the performance of the work supported. Although the EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant’s performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 2 CFR 200.325, review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (the EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

The EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient or subrecipients. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

**E. Will applications be partially funded?**

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.

**F. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?**

The estimated start date for projects resulting from this solicitation is **October 2023**. All project activities must be completed within the negotiated project performance period of three years.

**G. Changing the Ratio of Awards When There are Multiple Priorities In A Competition**

The actual award amounts and number of projects awarded described in *Section I: Funding Opportunity Description* may differ from the estimated amounts for many reasons, including the number of quality applications received, agency priorities, and funding availability. The EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and amount of awards under each track or change the ratio of assistance agreements it awards among the tracks.

### **SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Under this announcement, applications will be accepted from **political subdivisions of states and territories**. The EPA considers counties, cities, towns, parishes, and similar units of governments that have executive and legislative functions to be political subdivisions of states.

Local governments are generally political subdivisions of states and differ from state and federal governments in that their authority is not based directly on a constitution. Each state constitution describes in detail a procedure for establishing local governments. In most cases the state legislature must approve the creation or incorporation of a local government. The local government then receives a charter defining its organization, authority and responsibilities, including the means for electing governing officials. Local government units bear a variety of names, such as city, county, township, village, parish, district, etc. The legal significance of these terms may vary from state to state. The authority of local governments varies greatly. Generally, a local government has the authority to:

- Impose taxes
- Try people accused of breaking local laws or ordinances
- Administer local programs within its boundaries

Other entities (e.g., **state or territorial institutions of higher education, special districts, housing authorities**) must provide documentation that the state or territory in which they are located considers these entities to be a political subdivision of the state. Documentation must cite applicable state or territorial law. Examples of acceptable forms of proof include legal opinions from the state Attorney General or equivalent or from the Chief Legal Officer of the state college or university.

EPA has a goal of awarding up to 40% of the estimated total, or approximately \$16,000,000, to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, depending on the quality of the applications received (refer to *Section I.F: Program Tracks* for more information).

**Tribes and intertribal consortia** are not eligible entities under this announcement but will be eligible entities under the SWIFR tribal grant solicitation. For more information on the SWIFR Tribal grant solicitation, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/rcra/bipartisan-infrastructure-law-transforming-us-recycling-and-waste-management>.

**States** are not eligible entities under this announcement but are eligible entities under the SWIFR States and Territories grant program. For more information on the SWIFR States and Territories grant program, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/rcra/bipartisan-infrastructure-law-transforming-us-recycling-and-waste-management>

**Individuals, for-profit, and non-profit organizations** are not eligible entities under this announcement but may participate in projects as contractors and subrecipients provided the transactions apply with applicable regulatory policy requirements. More information can be found in the [EPA's Subaward Policy](#).

**Coalitions:** Groups of two or more eligible applicants (political subdivisions of states) may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity **must** be responsible for the grant. Reference *Section I.C.: Key Definitions* for more information on coalitions.

## **B. Leveraging or Matching Funds**

No matching funds are required under this competition. Although cost-sharing/matching is not required as a condition of eligibility under this competition, under *Section V: Application Review Information* of this announcement the EPA will evaluate applications based on a leveraging criterion (refer to *Section V.A: Evaluation Criteria*).

In order to be considered for evaluation, any leveraged funds/resources, and their source, must be identified in the proposal (See *Section IV.D: Application Materials*). Leveraged funding or other resources need not be for eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement unless the Applicant proposes to provide a voluntary cost share as its form of leveraging (see below). Leveraging other than voluntary cost share is not included in the project budget on the grant forms but should be included in the grant workplan in the form of a statement to the effect that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and their proposal.

If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost share, applicants must meet their sharing commitment as a condition of receiving EPA funding. The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget because the grant agreement includes the voluntary cost share. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a voluntary cost share if the standards at 2 CFR 200.306 are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for voluntary cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as voluntary cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants).

## **C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission, will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications from eligible applicants (refer to *Section III.A: Eligible Applicants* of this RFA) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking criteria in *Section V: Application Review Information* of this RFA. If necessary, the EPA may contact applicants to clarify threshold eligibility questions prior to making an eligibility determination. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration due to the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

The threshold eligibility criteria are:

1. Applications must address at least one of the mandatory objectives described in *Section I.G: Scope of Work*, of this announcement:

- Establish, increase, expand, or optimize collection and improve materials<sup>8</sup> management infrastructure;<sup>9</sup>
  - Fund the creation and construction of tangible infrastructure, technology, or other improvements to reduce contamination in the recycled materials stream;
  - Establish, increase, expand, or optimize capacity for materials management;
  - Establish, improve, expand, or optimize end-markets for the use of recycled commodities; or
  - Demonstrate a significant and measurable increase in the diversion,<sup>10</sup> recycling rate,<sup>11</sup> and quality of materials collected for municipal solid waste.
2. Applicants must be eligible, as described in *Section III.A: Eligible Applicants*, of this announcement.
  3. Named Contractors and Subrecipients. The EPA does not require or encourage applicants to name procurement contractors (including consultants) or subrecipients in applications for SWIFR grant funding. However, if an applicant chooses to identify a procurement contractor(s) or subrecipient(s) to conduct work proposed in this application, the applicant must demonstrate compliance with applicable regulatory requirements even if the entity is referred to as a “partner” in the application as described under *Section III.D: Named Contractors and Subrecipients* for more information.
  4. Federal funds requested must be between \$500,000 and \$4,000,000, inclusive. Applications requesting federal assistance funding below or in excess of this value will not be considered.
  5. Qualification for Program Track. Applicants must indicate if their application qualifies for track 1 or track 2 as defined under *Section I.F: Program Tracks* and include information demonstrating that the application qualifies.
  6. Applications must be for projects that support at least one of the goals and objectives from the EPA’s FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan identified in *Section I.H: General Environmental Results and EPA Strategic Plan Information* above.
  7. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in *Section IV.B: Submission Instructions* of this announcement or else they will be rejected. This includes submitting all of the mandatory application materials. **Please note, the budget table and description is separate from the SF424A form. Both are required to be completed submitted as part of the application.** In addition, where a page limit is expressed in *Section IV.D: Application Materials* with respect to the application, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

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<sup>8</sup> Materials and waste streams considered under SWIFR include: municipal solid waste (MSW), including plastics, organics, paper, metal, glass, etc. In addition, materials and waste streams considered include the management pathways of source reduction, reuse, sending materials to material recovery facilities, composting, industrial uses (e.g., rendering, anaerobic digestion (AD)), and feeding animals.

<sup>9</sup> Examples of materials management infrastructure includes but is not limited to: recycling/composting facilities, secondary processing facilities, and other facilities that manage MSW.

<sup>10</sup> Measured in tons of material diverted from landfill disposal or incineration.

<sup>11</sup> As defined by the Modeling Recycling Program Toolkit, available on the [EPA’s website](#).

8. Initial applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) as stated in *Section IV: Application and Submission Information* of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in *Section IV: Application and Submission Information*) on or before the application submission deadline published in *Section IV: Application and Submission Information* of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) should follow the instructions provided in *Section IV: Application and Submission Information*, which include both the requirement to contact [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.
9. Applications submitted outside of [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov). An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission outside of [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

In addition, if necessary, the EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making an eligibility determination.

Questions and answers will be posted on [EPA's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law website](https://www.epa.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law).

#### **D. Named Contractors and Subrecipients**

The EPA does not require or encourage applicants to name procurement contractors (including consultants) or subrecipients in applications for grant funding. However, if an applicant chooses to identify a procurement contractor(s) or subrecipient(s) to conduct work proposed in this application, the applicant must comply with the following requirements even if the entity is referred to as a "partner" in the application.

**Note** – Successful applicants that do not name procurement contractors or subrecipients in their applications must also comply with the requirements described below, regardless of if the contractor was procured before or after the EPA cooperative agreement is awarded. For example, firms or individual consultants that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements as provided in [2 CFR Part 200.319\(b\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/part-200/subpart-B/section-200.319).

- **Contractors.** Applicants that identify a procurement contractor(s) in their application where the amount of the contract will be more than the micro-purchase threshold in [2 CFR Part 200.320\(a\)\(1\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/part-200/subpart-B/section-200.320(a)(1)) (\$10,000 for most applicants) must demonstrate, in their application, how the

contractor (including consultants) was selected in compliance with the fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500. The EPA provides guidance on complying with the competition requirements in the [Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#). For example, the EPA will not accept sole source justifications for proposed procurement contracts for services such as environmental consulting and engineering that are available in the commercial marketplace.

Applicants must describe the procurement procedures that were followed to hire the contractor(s) that is named in this application and include information in where and when the Request for Proposals/Request for Qualifications was posted. Alternatively, state “n/a” or “not applicable” if a contractor is not named in this application.

- **Subrecipients.** All applicants must demonstrate that the named subrecipient is eligible for a subaward in compliance with [Appendix A of EPA’s Subaward Policy](#). This policy provides, among other things, that transactions between recipients and for-profit firms and individual consultants are procurement contracts rather than subawards when the transaction involves the acquisition of services from the firm or individual.

Refer to the EPA’s Contracts and Subawards Solicitation Clause for additional guidance on these requirements which must be met for all contractors (except for micro-purchases) and/or subrecipients specifically named in the application. Describe how the named subrecipient is eligible for subaward (e.g., is a nonprofit organization). Alternatively, state “n/a” or “not applicable” if a subrecipient is not named.

**Failure to demonstrate compliance with these requirements in the application will result in rejection of the application under Threshold Criterion 3.** EPA staff may contact the applicant to clarify issues or obtain additional information before making a final determination of compliance and rejection of the application.

## **E. Ineligible Costs or Activities and Other Considerations**

### **Prohibition on Use of Funds**

EPA funds (directly paid by EPA or from the recipient’s cost-share) cannot be used to design nor administer the collection of identical information from 10 or more parties, and EPA personnel may not participate in such activities. Reasonable costs for analyzing and publishing the independently collected information are allowable to the extent authorized in the EPA approved budget for this agreement.

All costs must meet the requirements for allowability in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E and applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 1500.

## **SECTION IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found in the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).**

### **A. Requirements to Submit through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures**

Applicants must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this funding opportunity based on the [Grants.gov](#) instructions in this announcement. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined [here](#). Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with submissions with respect to this opportunity only are addressed in *Section IV.C: Technical Issues with Submission* below.

### **B. Submission Instructions**

#### **1. SAM.gov (System for Award Management) Registration Instructions**

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active [SAM.gov](#) registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in [SAM.gov](#). If you do not have a [SAM.gov](#) account, then you will create an account using [login.gov](#) to complete your [SAM.gov](#) registration. [SAM.gov](#) registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by [SAM.gov](#), and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. [SAM.gov](#) requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

Please note that [SAM.gov](#) registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Question](#) on the difference for additional details.

Organizations should ensure that their [SAM.gov](#) registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for [Grants.gov](#) Registration and system functionality.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your [SAM.gov](#) account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm ET.

## 2. Grants.gov Registration Instructions

Once your [SAM.gov](#) account is active, you must register in [Grants.gov](#). [Grants.gov](#) will electronically receive your organization information, such as e-Business (EBiz) point of contact email address and UEI. Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active [Grants.gov](#) registration. [Grants.gov](#) registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal grant before, please review the [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#) instructions. As part of the [Grants.gov](#) registration process, the EBiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to members of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in [Grants.gov](#). Please review the [Intro to Grants.gov-Understanding User Roles](#) and [Learning Workspace – User Roles and Workspace Actions](#) for details on this important process.

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. 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 application submission deadline.

Contact [Grants.gov](#) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) to resolve technical issues with [Grants.gov](#). 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. The [Grants.gov](#) Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

## 3. Application Submission Process

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to [Grants.gov](#) and click the red “Apply” button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.

The electronic submission of your application to this funding opportunity must be made by an official representative of your organization who is registered with [Grants.gov](#) and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance. If the submit button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization’s EBiz point of contact or contact [Grants.gov](#) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants need to ensure that the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who submits the application through [Grants.gov](#) and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's [SAM.gov](#) account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

#### 4. Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to the EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than **January 16, 2023 at 11:59 PM ET**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Applications submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

#### 5. Releasing Copies of Applications

In concert with the EPA's commitment to conducting business in an open and transparent manner, copies of applications submitted under this solicitation may be made publicly available on the EPA's Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery Bipartisan Infrastructure Law website or other public website for a period of time after the selected applications are announced. The EPA recommends that applications not include trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is confidential or privileged, or sensitive information, if disclosed, that would invade another individual's personal privacy (e.g., an individual's salary, personal email addresses, etc.). However, if such information is included, it will be treated in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2.203. (Review *Section IV.G: Confidential Business Information* for more information.)

**Clearly indicate which portion(s) of the application you are claiming as confidential, privileged, or sensitive information, or state 'n/a' or 'not applicable' if the application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information. As provided at 40 CFR § 2.203(b) if no claim of confidential treatment accompanies the information when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by the EPA without further notice to the submitter.**

#### C. Technical Issues with Submission

If applicants experience technical issues during the submission of an application that they are unable to resolve, follow these procedures **before** the application deadline date:

- 1) Contact [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
- 2) Document the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) ticket/case number.
- 3) Send an email with the "EPA-I-OLEM-ORCR-23-03" in the subject line to [SWIFR@epa.gov](mailto:SWIFR@epa.gov) **before** the application deadline time and date and **must** include the following:
  - a) [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) ticket/case number(s)

- b) Description of the issue
- c) The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, the EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants). Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

Please note that successful submission through [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) or email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

The EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) on a case-by-case basis. The EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) due to [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit prior to the application submission deadline date because they did not properly or timely register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) is **not** an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants).

Training opportunities related to grants management can be found on the [EPA's Grants Website](https://www.epa.gov/grants).

#### **D. Application Materials**

**The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:**

##### **Mandatory Documents:**

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424);
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A);
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54;
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report; and
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Project Narrative, prepared as described in *Section IV.E: Content of Application Submission*.

##### **Optional Documents:**

1. Other Attachments, if applicable. This includes Milestones (reference Appendix D for an example). These may also include references/works cited, letters of support, staff CV/resumes, documentation demonstrating that competitive procurement was followed if specific names of contractors or equipment is mentioned in the application, documentation demonstrating that institutes of higher education are political subdivisions of states (please combine each of these individual items into one PDF. E.g., all the letters of support should be in one combined PDF, all the references should be in another combined PDF).

#### **E. Content of Application Submission**

In accordance with the mandatory documents listed in *Section IV.D: Application Materials*, all applications must contain the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" which is composed of the

“Summary Information Cover Letter,” the “Narrative Proposal,” and the “Budget Table and Description.”

The “Summary Information Cover Letter,” a maximum of 1 page in length, summarizes the overall project.

The “Narrative Proposal,” a maximum of 10 pages in length, must **explicitly** describe the applicant’s proposed project and specifically address each of the evaluation criteria disclosed in *Section V.A: Evaluation Criteria* and the threshold eligibility criteria in *Section III.C: Threshold Eligibility Criteria*.

The “Budget Table and Description” is described in more detail in *Section IV.E.v.: Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds*, below, and must not exceed 4 pages in length. It provides a response to Criterion 5: Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds.

**Project Narrative Attachment Form.** Project narratives should be concise and well organized. The following requirements apply.

- Must not exceed the above-mentioned page limits on the “Summary Information Cover Letter,” the “Narrative Proposal,” and the “Budget Table and Description.” Pages must be 8 1/2 x 11” typed pages.
- Must be single-line spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, one column per page, and no indenting paragraphs.
- Must provide the information detailed in this section and **include responses to all *Section III.C, Threshold Eligibility Criteria; Section V.A, Evaluation Criteria; as well as the information identified in Section I: Funding Opportunity Description.*** Factual information about your proposed project must be provided. Do not include discussions of broad principles that are not specific to the proposed work or project covered by your application. Responses to evaluation criteria should include the criteria number and title but need not restate the entire text of the criteria. Sufficient detail must be provided to allow for an evaluation of the merits of the proposal. **Vague descriptions, redundancy, and failure to address each of the evaluation criteria will result in a lower ranking.**

**Note: Applicants may, but are not required to, use the Optional Template for The Project Narrative Attachment Form included in Appendix B. Applicants that do not use the template will not be penalized.**

- a. **The Summary Information Cover Letter** (maximum of one page) must include:
  - i. **Project Title.**
  - ii. **Applicant Name.** Identify the name of the organization submitting the application.
  - iii. **Eligible Entity Type.** Identify your organization’s organization type from *Section III.A: Eligible Applicants*.

- iv. **Qualification for Program Track.** Applicants must indicate if their application qualifies for track 1 or track 2 as defined under *Section I.F: Program Tracks* and include information demonstrating that the application qualifies.
  - v. **UEI Number.** List the organization's UEI number.
  - vi. **Project Summary.** Briefly describe the project in two to four sentences.
  - vii. **Contact Information.** Include name, title, address, email address, phone number. You can list both a primary and an administrative contact.
  - viii. **Project Location.** Include the location where the project will be taking place. If project will occur in more than one location, indicate the city and state associated with the primary location.
  - ix. **Total Project Cost.** Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including leveraging or in-kind resources.
  - x. **EPA Funding Requested.** Specify the amount you are requesting from the EPA.
  - xi. **Project Period.** Provide estimated beginning and ending dates.
  - xii. **Program Objective Elements.** State the mandatory program objective elements addressed from *Section I.G: Scope of Work*.
  - xiii. **Strategic Plan Elements.** State the goals and objectives from the EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan identified above in *Section I.H: General Environmental Results and EPA Strategic Plan Linkage*.
  - xiv. **Cooperative Partners.** Provide names and phone numbers of individuals and organizations that have agreed to participate in the implementation of the project, if any. Note that any transactions with partners financed with EPA funding must comply with applicable regulatory requirements.
- b. **The Narrative Proposal** (maximum of ten pages). Provide the information below on how the applicant will implement and conduct its project by addressing each of the evaluation criteria in *Section V: Application Review Information* of this announcement. The Narrative Proposal must include:
- i. **Project Summary and Approach.** The summary shall contain the following components:
    - a. **Detailed project summary, description of specific actions and methods to be undertaken, including estimated timeline for each task.**

- Provide a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and plan for achieving project results in *Section I.G: Scope of Work*.
- Provide a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and plan for achieving project results in *Section I.H: General Environmental Results and EPA Strategic Plan Information* (with emphasis on results linked to the EPA’s Goal 1: Tackle the Climate Crisis) and *Section I.I: National Recycling Strategy Plan Linkage*.
- Clearly identify the goals and objectives of the project and includes an effective, easily understood plan with well-reasoned steps and milestones to meet the stated objectives.
- Provide a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project and for achieving the project goals and objectives by project end. Provide a schedule indicating start times and completion dates of significant tasks and responsibilities under your program. For efficiency, it is suggested that project milestones be coordinated with important events (e.g., budget cycle, meetings). Reference *Appendix D* for an example you may wish to use.
- Clearly describe each task and/or activity for the project.

**ii. Environmental Justice.** Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will address the disproportionate and adverse (see below) human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect the communities the project would benefit. As part of this evaluation, applications will be evaluated based on:

- a. How the project benefits communities including those that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community; and
- b. The extent to which the project addresses engagement with, local residents in these communities who will be affected by the project, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project.

Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens and/or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect or have affected the communities described in this solicitation. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions.

Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include: differential proximity and exposure to adverse environmental hazards; greater

susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to causes such as age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or limited access to quality nutrition); unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (for example, subsistence fishing or farming); cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes (due to causes such as lack of or ineffective language access programs, lack of programs to make processes accessible to persons with disabilities, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources); and degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.

The application must include relevant information such as demographics, geographic location, and community history. The EPA encourages the use of the EPA's [EJSCREEN tool](#), the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (or other EJ-based mapping tool) to help you characterize and describe your target community. Data from other sources (e.g., studies, census, and third-party reports) can also be included to give a more complete picture of the impacted communities and populations. Instructions and resources on how to use EJSCREEN are included at the hyperlink above. For any questions you have about EJSCREEN, please use this [webform](#) to contact the EPA.

- iii. Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes.** Provide a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and plan for achieving project results in *Section I.L: Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes*.
  - a. Anticipated Outcomes.** Specify the expected environmental outcomes including those described in *Section I.L: Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes* of this announcement. Discuss how you propose to track and measure your progress towards achieving the project outcomes and results. Include quantitative targets for outcomes when applicable (*Refer to Section V.A: Evaluation Criteria*).
  - b. Anticipated Outputs.** Identify the expected project outputs, including those described in *Section I.L: Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes* of this announcement and describe how you will track and measure your progress towards achieving the expected project outputs. Outputs, quantitative or qualitative, must be measurable during the project performance period. Include quantitative targets for outputs when applicable.
- iv. Programmatic Capability and 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) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe:

- a. past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to *Section IV: Application and Submission Information* of the solicitation;
- b. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV of the solicitation including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not;
- c. organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project; and,
- d. staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in *Section V: Application Review Information*, 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.

- v. **Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds.** Describe your organization's procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

**Budget Table and Description.** Include a detailed budget narrative which clearly explains how funds will be used. The budget table and description should not exceed 4 pages (*Refer to Appendix C: Example Budget Table and Description*). Please note, the budget table and description is different than the SF424A form. Both are required to be completed as part of this RFA. The successful applicant's budget description should identify (1) specific tasks for which EPA funding will be used, (2) the costs associated with each task, (3) the costs that the applicant or other partners will fund for each task, if appropriate, and (4) what outputs will be produced as a result of each task. Refer to *Section I.L: Measuring and Reporting Environmental Results: Outputs and Outcomes* for a definition of outputs and outcomes.

If the project budget includes any voluntary cost-share, the Budget Detail portion of the project narrative must include a detailed description of how the applicant will obtain the cost-share and how the cost-share funding will be used. **If the EPA accepts an offer**

**for a voluntary cost-share, applicants must meet their sharing commitment as a legal condition of receiving EPA funding.** If the proposed cost-share is to be provided by a third-party, a letter of commitment is required. Any form of cost-share included in the Budget Detail must also be include on the SF-424 and SF-424A. Please refer to *Section III.B: Leveraging or Matching Funds* of this RFA for more detailed information on cost-share.

Applicants should be aware that if their proposals include using Federal funds for a project that includes the purchase of goods, products, and materials on any form of construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States for identified EPA financial assistance funding programs, they must comply with the Build America, Buy America [Term and Condition](#) if they are selected for award. Please refer to *Section VI.F: Build America, Buy America* of this RFA for additional information and consider this information when preparing your budget.

Applicants must **itemize** costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

Applicants should use the following instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table (*see Appendix C, Example Budget Table and Description*) to complete the Budget Detail section of the work plan. Applicants should refer to the EPA's [Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#) for additional information relating to cost categories.

- **Personnel - List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.** This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (paid employees of the applicant organization as reflected in payroll tax records). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services), this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of contractors (including individual consultants), which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, or non-employee program participants (e.g., interns or volunteers) which are included in the “Other” category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization’s negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.

If budget information is not provided on requested personnel costs, applications should include in their narrative how they expect to manage the administrative components of the grant.

- **Fringe Benefits - Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included.** Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits may include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee

insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. If the applicant's fringe rate does not include the cost of leave, and the applicant intends to charge leave to the agreement, it must provide supplemental information describing its proposed method(s) for determining and equitably distributing these costs.

- **Travel - Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-State and out-of-State, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.** Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g., inspections) or related to proposed project activities (e.g., attendance at meetings). Only include travel costs for employees in the travel category. Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of contractors (including individual consultants), which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, and non-employee program participants (e.g., trainees) which are included in the "Other" category. Further, travel does not include bus rentals for group trips, which would be covered under the contractual category. Finally, if the applicant intends to use any funds for travel outside the United States, it must be specifically identified. All proposed foreign travel must be approved by the EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs prior to being taken.
- **Equipment** - Identify each item to be purchased and owned by the applicant which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year. Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Note: If your organization has written procurement procedures that define a threshold for equipment costs that is lower than \$5,000, then that threshold takes precedence. Refer to the [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for the EPA's policies on competitive procurements and the Build America, Buy America provisions outlined in *Section VI.F Build America, Buy America*. When evaluating the budget criterion, the EPA will take into consideration costs necessary to successfully manage the project. This includes ensuring that your budget includes costs for the management of funds, reporting on outcomes/outputs, etc., in addition to the cost of equipment. Please include an explanation of this matter in the Budget Table and Description.
- **Supplies - "Supplies" means all tangible personal property other than "equipment."** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as, occasional photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the "Other" category.
- **Contractual - Identify each type of proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual services (including consulting services) are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. The EPA's [Subaward Policy and Supplemental Frequent Questions](#) has detailed guidance available for differentiating between contractors and subrecipients. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the "Other" category.

If the application includes a subaward to a recipient (the “pass-through entity”), the applicant must explain how the pass-through entity will provide adequate resources to manage the award, including providing required financial and programmatic reports to the EPA, and for monitoring subrecipients as required by [2 CFR 200.332](#).

The EPA does not require applicants to identify specific contractors. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the anticipated scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known. Any proposed non-competed/sole-source contracts in excess of \$10,000 must include a justification. Note that it is unlikely that the EPA will accept proposed sole source contracts for goods and services (e.g., consulting) that are widely available in the commercial market. Refer to the [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for the EPA’s policies on competitive procurements and encouraging the use of small and disadvantaged business enterprises.

- **Eligible Construction Costs.** Construction excludes the cost of land acquisition and off-site improvements unless authorized by statute. (e.g., the definition of “construction” in section 1004(2) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act includes acquisition of interests in lands).

Construction costs may include site preparation, demolishing and building facilities, making permanent improvements to facilities or other real property, major renovations of existing facilities, remediation of contamination and related architectural or engineering services. With very few exceptions, recipients carry out construction projects by hiring contractors which typically include a general contractor and an architectural or engineering firm for design work and in some cases purchasing equipment for installation at the site.

The recipient should provide a list of planned construction contracts along with a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided, planned duration, and planned procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known. Recipients should consult the guidance on contracting in *Section VI: Award Administration Information* for additional information on competition requirements. The cost plus percentage of construction cost method of contracting is prohibited by [2 CFR 200.324\(d\)](#).

**Categorizing Construction Costs.** Construction costs are to be categorized on the SF 424A budget table as follows:

- Anticipated costs for hiring general contractors and other contractors performing activities described in the DBE Rule’s definition of *Construction* will be categorized as “Construction”.

- Anticipated costs for pre-construction architectural and engineering *Services* as defined in the DBE rule for design and specifications documents will be categorized as “Contractual”.
- Anticipated costs for separately purchased *Equipment* as defined in the DBE Rule that will be installed in a facility or used to remediate contamination will be categorized as “Equipment”.
- Anticipated costs for land acquisition or relocation assistance paid to individuals or businesses will be categorized as “Other”.
- Force Account – If recipient personnel or equipment are to be used to perform eligible construction project work (e.g., engineering, inspection, waste removal) under force account, approval must be obtained from an Authorized EPA Official either at time of award or in response to a post-award written request. Force account work must be more economical than contracting the work out or necessitated by emergency. Recipients must demonstrate that recipient personnel have the necessary competence to do the work. Force account costs for personnel are budgeted in the “Personnel” and “Fringe Benefit” categories. Costs for equipment purchased for the project are budgeted in the “Equipment” category. Usage charges for equipment in recipients’ existing inventory is categorized as “Other”. All force account costs must be supported by adequate financial records as required by 2 CFR 200.302, 2 CFR 200.430 and 2 CFR 200.431. Note that recipients must maintain records demonstrating that equipment usage charges are reasonable based on lease rates for similar equipment in the relevant market.
- **Other - List each item in sufficient detail for the EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance; rental/lease of equipment or supplies; occasional photocopying; participant support costs such as non-employee training stipends and travel; subsidies or rebates for purchases of pollution control equipment; and subaward costs. Applicants should describe the items included in the “Other” category and include the estimated amount of participant support costs (e.g., stipends to encourage participation in community meetings) in a separate line item. Please refer to [EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs](#) for additional information.

Subawards (e.g., subgrants) are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term *Subaward* is defined in 2 CFR 200.1. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work as a separate line item in the “Other” category and a description of the types of activities to be supported. Refer to the [EPA’s Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions](#) for additional guidance.

- **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.** Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, the applicant must have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final or provisional or 10% de-minimis). Additional information is available in the [EPA's Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements](#). Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:

- Personnel: (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs)
- Personnel and Fringe: (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs)
- Modified Total Direct Costs: (Indirect Rate x Modified Total direct costs = Indirect Costs)
- Direct Costs minus distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment: (Indirect Rate x (total direct cost–distorting factors) = Indirect Costs)

Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award.

- **Management Fees:** When formulating budgets for applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant's cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with the EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

Fundraising: EPA financial assistance under this RFA cannot be used for fundraising without prior approval. Therefore, any costs associated with fundraising may not be included in the budget for your application or charged to the resultant cooperative agreement.

Applicants should clearly identify any anticipated program income in their proposal.

- vi. **Project Sustainability.** Describe your organization's plan to promote and continue efforts to support post-consumer materials management after EPA funding for this project has ended. Include how the project will continue to sustain the outputs and outcomes as well as any direction for future results. Please note, the "sustainability" here refers to sustaining the project over time as opposed to overall environmental

sustainability.

**vii. Innovative Approaches and Solutions.** Describe how the proposed project includes innovative approaches (e.g., not usual, routine or established practices) to support the development of infrastructure for post-consumer materials management. Examples of innovative approaches and solutions include but are not limited to new or novel services, purchase or installation of emerging technologies, creating and encouraging the development of emerging markets, and solving local challenges around collection or operations.

**viii. Project Replicability.** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which the application identifies and explains how results from the project can be replicated in other communities.

**ix. Leveraging.** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate that they will leverage additional funds/ resources beyond the grant funds awarded to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how they will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds/resources will play to support the proposed project activities.

**(Optional) Other Attachments.** The applicant can provide additional attachments such as references/works cited, milestones, letters of support, or CV/Resume. Letters of support should include the names and phone numbers of persons to contact at the organization providing the letter of support along with a description of what involvement (e.g., assistance, role) the organization has or will have with your organization/project. Applicants may include letters confirming commitments.

## **F. Pre-Application Assistance**

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/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 any of the language or provisions in the announcement. Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in *Section VII: Agency Contacts* as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting an application.

In addition, if necessary, the EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making an eligibility determination.

Questions and answers will be posted on [EPA's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law website](#).

The Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery will conduct two series of virtual webinar sessions entitled “**Solid Waste Infrastructure For Recycling Grants**” **Parts One and Two** to assist potential applicants under this competitive funding opportunity. The first series of webinars will be held on December 5 and 7, 2022, and the second series on December 13 and 19, 2022. The webinars will review the funding opportunity, key sections of the application, and the application process. Potential applicants seeking funding under this competitive announcement (EPA-I-OLEM-ORCR-23-03) are encouraged to participate.

To access the virtual webinar, you must register online using the site below. After registration, you will receive a link with instructions on how to access/attend the webinar. For those unable to attend, the webinar will be recorded and posted on the Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (ORCR) Bipartisan Infrastructure Law website and may be used as a reference, as needed.

For additional information on registering for the webinar, other EPA Resources related to the circular economy, sustainable materials management, and new funding opportunities under the IIJA, please visit the [EPA's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law website](#).

## **G. Confidential Business Information**

The EPA recommends that you do not include confidential business information (CBI) in your application. However, if CBI is included, it will be treated in accordance with [40 CFR 2.203](#). Applicants must clearly indicate which portion(s) of their application they are claiming as CBI. The EPA will evaluate such claims in accordance with [40 CFR Part 2](#). If no claim of confidentiality is made, the EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by [40 CFR 2.204\(c\)\(2\)](#) prior to disclosure. The agency protects competitive applications from disclosure under applicable provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

## **H. Intergovernmental Review Act**

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. The EPA implemented the Executive Order in 40 CFR Part 29. EPA may require applicants selected for funding to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review as provided at 40 CFR 29.7 and 40 CFR 29.8. The SPOC list can be found on the webpage below:

- [Office of Federal Financial Management Resources and Other Information](#)

EPA may require successful applicants from states that do not have a SPOC to provide a copy of their application for review to directly affected state, area-wide, regional and local government entities as provided at 40 CFR 29.7 and 40 CFR 29.8. These reviews are not required before submitting an application. Only applicants that EPA selects for funding under this announcement are subject to the Intergovernmental Review requirement.

**SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

**A. Evaluation Criteria**

Eligible entities whose applications meet the threshold criteria in *Section III: Eligibility Information* of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion set forth below. Applicants must directly and explicitly address these criteria as described in *Section IV.D: Application Materials*. Please reference *Appendix B* for an optional template for the Project Narrative Attachment Form. The information provided must be easily identifiable and clearly described to ensure the content of the application is clearly laid out for reviewers. Each application will be rated under a points system, with a total of 105 points possible. **To assist the EPA reviewers, applicants are strongly encouraged to reference the numbers and titles of the evaluation criteria in their project narratives to help identify where the criteria are being addressed.**

Evaluation Criteria and Description	Maximum Points per Criterion
<p><b>1. Project Summary and Approach.</b> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Project Narrative includes a clearly written description of the overall project (5 points);</li> <li>b. Project meets the requirements in <i>Section I.G: Scope of Work, Section I.H: General Environmental Results and Strategic Plan Information</i> (15 points);</li> <li>c. Project Narrative clearly identifies the goals and objectives of the project and includes an effective, easily understood plan with well-reasoned steps and milestones to meet the stated objectives (10 points);</li> <li>d. Project Narrative sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project and for achieving the project goals and objectives by project end (5 points).</li> </ul>	<p><b>35</b></p>
<p><b>2. Environmental Justice.</b> Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will address the disproportionate and adverse (see below) human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect the communities the project would benefit. As part of this evaluation, applications will be evaluated based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How the project benefits communities including those that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community (10 points); and,</li> </ul>	<p><b>15</b></p>

Evaluation Criteria and Description	Maximum Points per Criterion
<p>b. The extent to which the project addresses engagement with, local residents in these communities who will be affected by the project, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project (5 points).</p> <p>Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens and/or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect or have affected the communities described in this solicitation. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions.</p> <p>Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include: differential proximity and exposure to adverse environmental hazards; greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to causes such as age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or limited access to quality nutrition); unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (for example, subsistence fishing or farming); cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes (due to causes such as lack of or ineffective language access programs, lack of programs to make processes accessible to persons with disabilities, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources); and degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.</p>	
<p><b>3. Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes.</b> Outputs and outcomes must be quantitative or qualitative and must measure environmental improvement described in <i>Section I.L: Measuring and Reporting Environmental Results: Outputs and Outcomes</i> or should be directly linked to environmental improvement. Include quantitative targets as appropriate.</p>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>4. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance.</b> Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p> <p>a. past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV: <i>Application and Submission Information</i> of the solicitation (2.5 points);</p> <p>b. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV: <i>Application and Submission Information</i> of the solicitation including whether the applicant</p>	<b>10</b>

Evaluation Criteria and Description	Maximum Points per Criterion
<p>submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not (2.5 points);</p> <p>c. organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project (2.5 points); and,</p> <p>d. staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project (2.5 points).</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applications under item a. and b. of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items i and ii above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p>	
<p><b>5. Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds.</b> Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The Agency will evaluate the proposed project budget and narrative to determine the extent and quality to which:</p> <p>a. Costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes. (3 points)</p> <p>b. The proposed budget provides a detailed breakout of the approximate funding used for each major activity. (4 points)</p> <p>c. The application conveys the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (3 points)</p> <p><b>Please provide the response to this criterion as part of your budget table and description (see <i>Appendix C</i> for example).</b></p>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>6. Project Sustainability.</b> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which the application continues to</p>	<b>10</b>

Evaluation Criteria and Description	Maximum Points per Criterion
<p>promote efforts to support post-consumer materials management after EPA funding for this project has ended. This may include a description of how new and expanded infrastructure and new programs will be funded following the EPA funding period.</p> <p>Please note, the “sustainability” here refers to sustaining the project over time as opposed to overall environmental sustainability.</p>	
<p><b>7. Innovative Approaches and Solutions.</b> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent to which the application proposes a project that includes innovative approaches (e.g., not usual, routine or established practices) to support the development of infrastructure for post-consumer materials management. Examples of innovative approaches and solutions include but are not limited to: new or novel services, purchase or installation of emerging technologies, creating and encouraging the development of emerging markets, solving local challenges around collection or operations, and others.</p>	5
<p><b>8. Project Replicability.</b> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which the application identifies and explains how results from the project can be replicated in other communities.</p>	5
<p><b>9. Leveraging.</b> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate that they will leverage additional funds/ resources beyond the grant funds awarded to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how they will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds/resources will play to support the proposed project activities</p>	5
<p><b>Total points possible</b></p>	<b>105</b>

## B. Review and Selection Process

**1. Threshold Eligibility Screening Process** - All applications received by the submission deadline will first be screened by the EPA using the threshold eligibility criteria in *Section III.C: Threshold Eligibility Criteria*. Applications that do not pass the threshold eligibility review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding. 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. Applications meeting the threshold eligibility criteria will be reviewed through a regional review process by an EPA panel, including SMM program staff.

**2. Panel Review and Evaluation Process** - All applications that meet the Threshold Eligibility Criteria after the screening review will be forwarded to the appropriate EPA Region (where the project will be performed) for technical review based on the criteria in *Section V: Application Review Information*. Separate ranking lists for Track 1 and Track 2 will be developed by each review group. Those ranking lists will also clearly identify projects eligible for track consideration, as described in *Section II.A: What is the amount of available funding?*

**3. Final Selection Process and Other Factors** – Final rankings and selection recommendations from the regional review panels based on the ranking lists will be presented to the Headquarters Selection Official who will then make the final selections for award based on the ranking lists. The EPA anticipates selecting at least one grant per EPA region, depending on the quality of the applications received. The EPA expects to select applications in Track 1 to meet the 40% Justice40 goal as described in *Section II: Award Information*. In addition to the ranking lists, the Selection Official may also consider any of the following other factors in making final selection decisions among the high-ranking applications from the regional lists:

- a. **Geographic Diversity** – The EPA may consider the mix of high-ranking projects located in urban and rural areas or different regions of the country when making final selections, as well as the geographical nature or impact of the project.
- b. **Programmatic Priorities** – ORCR priorities that may focus on certain SMM, environmental, and/or public health issues. These overarching priorities may be considered when making final selections among high-ranking applications.
- c. **Diversity of Project Types** – The EPA may consider the mix of high-ranking project types when making final selections to ensure that project types vary among those being awarded.
- d. **Diversity of Organization Types** – The EPA may consider the mix of high-ranking projects from various types of organizations when making final selections to ensure that project types vary among those being awarded.
- e. **“Shovel-Ready” Projects** – The EPA may consider projects that can be implemented in six to 12 months when making final selections.
- f. **Impactful Projects** – EPA may consider projects that will result in a substantial shift in the management pathways within the community, including a significant and measurable change in the diversion (in tons of material diverted from disposal) and/or recycling rate for municipal solid waste, including but not limited to food and organics waste and packaging materials.
- g. **Availability of funds.**

After final selections are made, the EPA will then make the awards. While the EPA expects to make awards of approximately \$40,000,000 in total, including approximately \$16,000,000 placed into a track specifically for awards that benefit eligible disadvantaged communities, these amounts may be increased or decreased subject to the number of quality applications received and other relevant

considerations. The EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this announcement.

## **SECTION VI – AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

### **A. Award Notification**

The EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic mail by April 2023. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA's Grants and Interagency Agreement Management Division. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer 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 grants officer, 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 (e.g., work plan), 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.

### **B. Combining Applications into One Award**

If an applicant submits applications for multiple tasks/activities under this competition, and is selected for multiple tasks/activities, the EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines separate applications for different tasks/activities.

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

1. Applicants selected for award will be required to submit a final cooperative agreement proposal package to the EPA. This package will include an EPA-approved final work plan that describes the work to be performed, a final budget, and the required certification forms. Programmatic terms and conditions will be negotiated with the selected recipient.
2. Approved cooperative agreements will include terms and conditions that will be binding on the grant recipient. Terms and conditions specify what grantees must do to ensure that grant-related and program-related requirements are met. Terms and conditions may be viewed at: [Grant Terms and Conditions](#). A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: [Introduction to Regulations, Policies and Guidance for EPA Grants](#).
3. **Reimbursement Limitation.** If the recipient expends more than the amount of funding in its EPA approved budget in anticipation of receiving additional funds from the EPA, it does so at its own risk. The EPA is not legally obligated to reimburse the recipient for costs incurred in excess of the EPA approved budget.

## **D. Use of Funds**

An applicant that receives an award under this announcement is expected to manage cooperative agreement funds efficiently and effectively and make sufficient progress towards completing the project activities described in the work plan in a timely manner. The cooperative agreement will include terms/conditions implementing this requirement. The Agency expects timely drawdown of funds and a yearly financial report. In addition to quarterly reports, other required financial reports will provide the Agency with information regarding progress being made.

## **E. Program Income**

In accordance with 2 CFR Part 200.307(e)(2) and 2 CFR 1500.8(b), the recipient is hereby authorized to retain program income earned during the project period.

The program income shall be added to funds committed to the project by the EPA and used for the purposes and under the conditions of the assistance agreement.

The recipient must provide as part of its quarterly performance report, a description of how program income is being used. Further, a report on the amount of program income earned during the award period must be submitted with the quarterly Federal Financial Report, Standard Form 425.

## **F. Build America, Buy America**

Applicants should be aware that if their proposals include using Federal funds for a project that includes the purchase of goods, products, and materials on any form of construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States for identified EPA financial assistance funding programs, they must comply with the following Term and Condition if they are selected for award. Please consider this information when preparing budget information. Applicants should direct questions about this requirement to the program Point of Contact listed in *Section VII: Agency Contact* for the Notice of Funding Opportunity Notice.

- a. The recipient is subject to the Buy America Sourcing requirements under the Build America, Buy America provisions of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) for the types of infrastructure projects under the EPA program and activities specified in the chart, [“Environmental Protection Agency's Identification of Federal Financial Assistance Infrastructure Programs Subject to the Build America Buy America Provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.”](#) None of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project of infrastructure unless all iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project are produced in the United States. The Buy America preference requirement applies to an entire infrastructure project, even if it is funded by both Federal and non-Federal funds. The recipient must implement these requirements in its procurements, and these requirements must flow down to all subawards and contracts at any tier. For legal definitions and sourcing requirements, the recipient must consult EPA's [Build America, Buy America website](#) and the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) [Memorandum M-22-11, Initial Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure](#).

- b. When supported by rationale provided in IJIA § 70914, the recipient may submit a waiver request to EPA. Recipients should request guidance on the submission instructions of an EPA waiver request from the EPA Project Officer for this agreement. A list of approved EPA waivers (general applicability and project specific) is available on the [EPA Build America, Buy America website](#).

## **G. 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 [Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures](#). Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in *Section VII: Agency Contact* of the announcement. Note, the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

## **H. Reporting Requirements**

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. The quarterly progress reports will be submitted to the EPA Project Officer within thirty days after each reporting period. These reports shall cover work status, work progress, difficulties encountered, preliminary data results and a statement of activity anticipated during the subsequent reporting period. A discussion of expenditures along with a comparison of the percentage of the project completed to the project schedule and an explanation of significant discrepancies shall be included in the report. The report shall also include any changes of key personnel concerned with the project.

Applicants should describe how they plan to meet the requirement to provide as part of its quarterly performance report, a description of how program income is being used. Applicants should also indicate how they plan to meet the requirement to submit a report on the amount of program income earned during the award period must be submitted with the quarterly Federal Financial Report, Standard Form 425.

At the close of the grant, the successful applicant will submit a final technical report to the EPA Project Officer within 90 calendar days of completion of the period of performance. The final technical report shall include a summary of the project or activity, advances or goals achieved, and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final technical report should discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned during the project period.

## **SECTION VII – AGENCY CONTACT**

Dan Halpert, U.S. EPA, Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (MC 5306P), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460; e-mail: [SWIFR@epa.gov](mailto:SWIFR@epa.gov).

## **APPENDIX A: NARRATIVE PROPOSAL CHECKLIST AND HELPFUL HINTS**

Disclaimer: This Narrative Proposal Checklist does not supersede the requirements in the Request for Applications (RFA). Applicants should address all criteria outlined in the RFA. This abbreviated checklist is intended to provide a streamlined representation of the RFA and to offer helpful hints to address a few select criterion that have presented challenges to past applicants.

### **Threshold Criteria**

Applicants must address **all** threshold criteria. Applications that fail to meet any one of the threshold criteria will not be considered further.

1. Applications must address at least one of the mandatory objectives described in *Section I.G, Scope of Work*, of this announcement.
2. Applicants must be eligible, as described in *Section III.A: Eligible Applicants*, of this announcement.
3. If an applicant chooses to identify a procurement contractor(s) or subrecipient(s) to conduct work proposed in this application, the applicant must comply with the requirements listed under *Section III.A: Eligible Applicants* of this RFA, even if the entity is referred to as a “partner” in the application.
4. Federal funds requested must be between \$500,000 and \$4,000,000, inclusive. Applications requesting federal assistance funding below or in excess of this value will not be considered.
5. Qualification for Program Track. Applications must indicate if it qualifies for track 1 or track 2 as defined under *Section I.F: Program Tracks*. Include information demonstrating that you qualify.
6. Applications must be for projects that support at least one of the goals and objectives from the EPA’s FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan identified in *Section I.H: General Environmental Results and EPA Strategic Plan Linkage*
7. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in *Section IV.B: Submission Instructions* of this announcement.
8. Applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) as specified in *Section IV.B: Submission Instructions* of this announcement.
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 associated with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues.

### **Summary Information Cover Letter**

The Project Narrative Attachment Form must include a Summary Information Cover Letter with the following information:

- i. **Project Title.**
- ii. **Applicant Name.** Identify the name of the organization submitting the application.
- iii. **Eligible Entity Type.** Identify your organization’s organization type from *Section III.A: Eligible Entities*.
- iv. **Qualification for Program Track.** Applicants must indicate if their application qualifies for track 1 or track 2 as defined under *Section I.F: Program Tracks* and include information demonstrating that the application qualifies.
- v. **UEI Number.** List the organization’s UEI number.
- vi. **Project Summary.** Briefly describe the project in two to four sentences.
- vii. **Contact Information.** Include name, title, address, email address, phone number. You can list both a primary and an administrative contact.
- viii. **Project Location.** Include the location where the project will be taking place. If project will occur in more than one location, indicate the city and state associated with the primary location.
- ix. **Total Project Cost.** Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including leveraging or in-kind resources.
- x. **EPA Funding Requested.** Specify the amount you are requesting from the EPA. Federal funds requested must be between \$500,000 and \$4,000,000, inclusive.
- xi. **Project Period.** Provide estimated beginning and ending dates.
- xii. **Program Objective Elements.** State the mandatory program objective elements addressed from *Section I.G: Scope of Work*.
- xiii. **Strategic Plan Elements.** Specify the goals and objectives from the EPA’s FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.
- xiv. **Cooperative Partners.** Provide names and phone numbers of individuals and organizations that have agreed to participate in the implementation of the project, if any.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Applicants must thoroughly address each of the following Evaluation Criteria.

*\*Helpful Hint: An excellent application will use the title of each criterion as a label or section header within the narrative. This will help ensure you address each criterion in the narrative.*

- **Project Summary and Approach (35 points)**

Applicants must address four elements under the project description criterion:

- ✓ Project Narrative includes a clearly written description of the overall project (5 points);
  - ✓ Project meets the requirements in *Section I.G: Scope of Work* and *Section I.H: General Environmental Results and Strategic Plan Information* (15 points);
  - ✓ Project Narrative clearly identifies the goals and objectives of the project and includes an effective, easily understood plan with well-reasoned steps and milestones to meet the stated objectives (10 points); and
  - ✓ Project Narrative sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project and for achieving the project goals and objectives by project end (5 points).
- **Environmental Justice (15 points)**  
Applicants must address two elements under the environmental justice criterion:
    - ✓ How the project benefits communities including those that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above (10 points); and,
    - ✓ The extent to which the project addresses engagement with, local residents in these communities who will be affected by the project, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project (5 points).
- **Performance Measure: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (10 points)**  
Outputs and outcomes must be quantitative or qualitative and must measure environmental improvement described in *Section I.L: Measuring and Reporting Environmental Results: Outputs and Outcomes* or should be directly linked to environmental improvement. Include quantitative targets as appropriate.
- **Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance (10 points)**  
Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:
    - ✓ past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to *Section IV: Application and Submission Information* of the solicitation (2.5 points);
    - ✓ history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to *Section IV: Application and Submission Information* of the solicitation including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not (2.5 points);
    - ✓ organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project (2.5 points); and,

- ✓ staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project (2.5 points).

- **Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds (10 points)**

Describe how the project meets each of the three elements under budget and expenditure:

- ✓ Costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes. (3 points)
- ✓ The proposed budget provides a detailed breakout of the approximate funding used for each major activity. (4 points)
- ✓ The application conveys the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (3 points)

- **Project Sustainability (10 points)**

Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which the application continues to promote efforts to support post-consumer materials management after the EPA funding for this project has ended. This may include a description of how new and expanded infrastructure and new programs will be funded following the EPA funding period. Please note, “sustainability” refers to sustaining the project over time as opposed to overall environmental sustainability.

- **Innovative Approaches and Solutions (5 points)**

Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent to which the application proposes a project that includes innovative approaches (e.g., not usual, routine or established practices) to support the development of infrastructure for post-consumer materials management. Examples of innovative approaches and solutions include but are not limited to: new or novel services, purchase or installation of emerging technologies, creating and encouraging the development of emerging markets, solving local challenges around collection or operations, and others.

- **Project Replicability (5 points)**

Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which the application identifies and explains how results from the project can be replicated in other communities.

- **Leveraging (5 points)**

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate that they will leverage additional funds/ resources beyond the grant funds awarded to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how they will obtain the leveraged

resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds/resources will play to support the proposed project activities

## **APPENDIX B: OPTIONAL TEMPLATE FOR THE PROJECT NARRATIVE ATTACHMENT FORM**

All portions of the Project Narrative Attachment Form must substantially comply with the specific instructions, format, and content defined in the RFA. Page counts refer to one-side of a single-spaced typed page. Pages in excess of the identified limits will not be considered. The milestones, and budget table, and narrative have separate page limits and will be considered in the evaluation.

**Instructions:** The Project Narrative Attachment Form includes a Summary Information page, the Narrative Proposal, and the Budget Table and Description. The application's Summary Information page should follow the format below. **Italicized and bracketed text should be deleted before submission.**

All portions of the narrative proposal must substantially comply with the specific instructions, and content defined in the RFA. **Applicants may, but are not required to, use the Template for The Project Narrative Attachment Form here in Appendix B. Applicants that do not use the template will not be penalized.** Page counts refer to one-side of a single-spaced typed page. Pages more than the identified limits will not be considered. The milestones, and budget table, and narrative have separate page limits and will be considered in the evaluation.

### **Template for Summary Information Cover Letter**

*[The Summary Information should appear on the first page of the Proposal Attachment Form and should not exceed one page.]*

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) Solid Waste Infrastructure For Recycling Cooperative Agreement 2022 EPA-I-OLEM-ORCR-23-03**

- i. **Project Title:** *[Project title]*
- ii. **Applicant Name:** *[Name of organization]*
- iii. **Eligible Entity Type:** *[Eligible entity type]*
- iv. **Qualification for Program Track:** *[Include information demonstrating that your application qualifies for Track 1 (e.g., describe how the proposed project(s) benefit disadvantaged communities as defined in this solicitation) or Track 2].*
- v. **UEI Number:** *[UEI number]*
- vi. **Project Summary:** *[Briefly describe your project in two to four sentences]*
- vii. **Contact Information:** *[Include name of contact person(s), title, address, e-mail address, phone number. An administrative and a primary contact can be listed]*
- viii. **Project Location:** *[Location where the project will be taking place]*

- ix. **Total Project Cost:** *[Specify the total cost of the project]*
- x. **EPA Funding Requested:** *[Specify the amount of funding requested from EPA]*
- xi. **Project period:** *[Provide anticipated project start date and anticipated project completion date]*
- xii. **Program Objective Elements:** *[Mandatory program objective elements in Section I.G: Scope of Work]*
- xiii. **Strategic Plan Elements:** *[Specify the goals and objectives from the EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan]*
- xiv. **Cooperative Partners:** *[Provide names and phone numbers of individuals and organizations that have agreed to participate in the implementation of the project, if any.]*

## **Template for Narrative Proposal**

*[Applicants may use the following template for their Narrative Proposal and should not exceed 10 pages in length. Text that is italicized and bracketed should be deleted when submitting the application. Applicants are encouraged to use subheadings under each criterion to aid the reviewers in effectively reviewing your application.]*

### **Criterion 1: Project Summary and Approach (35 points)**

- a. Project Narrative including a clearly written description of the overall project: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
- b. Application identifies and explains how project meets the requirements in Section I.G: Scope of Work and Section I.H: General Environmental Results and EPA Strategic Plan Linkage: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
- c. Project Narrative clearly identifies the goals and objectives of the project and includes an effective, easily understood plan with well-reasoned steps and milestones to meet the stated objectives: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
- d. Project Narrative sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project and for achieving the project goals and objectives by project end: *[Applicant's text goes here]*

### **Criterion 2: Environmental Justice (15 points)**

- a. How the project benefits communities including those that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
- b. The extent to which the project addresses engagement local residents in communities who will be affected by the project, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project: *[Applicant's text goes here]*

### **Criterion 3: Performance Measure – Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (10 points)**

*[Applicant's text goes here]*

### **Criterion 4: Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (10 points)**

- a. Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV: Application and Submission Information of the solicitation: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
- b. History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV: Application and Submission Information of the solicitation including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress

towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not:  
*[Applicant's text goes here]*

- c. Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
- d. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project: *[Applicant's text goes here]*

**Criterion 5: Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds (10 points)**

Please see Budget Table and Description *[Applicant's text goes in the 4-page Budget Table and Description. Please reference Appendix C for an example.]*

**Criterion 6: Project Sustainability (10 points)**

*[Applicant's text goes here]*

**Criterion 7: Innovative Approaches and Solutions (5 points)**

*[Applicant's text goes here]*

**Criterion 8: Replicability (5 points)**

*[Applicant's text goes here]*

**Criterion 9: Leveraging (5 points)**

*[Applicant's text goes here]*

**List of Attachments:**

*[List all attachments (budget table and description, timeline with milestones, letters of support) that are being submitted with this package.]*

*[You **do not** need to list the following mandatory documents:*

- *Standard Form 424: Application for Federal Assistance,*
- *Standard Form 424A: Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
- *EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54*
- *EPA Form 4700-4: Pre-Award Compliance Review Report]*

## APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE BUDGET TABLE AND DESCRIPTION

Applications should include a detailed budget table and a detailed budget description, providing more detail than what is found in SF-424A. An applicant’s budget narrative must account for both federal funds and any non-federal federal funds.

The budget description should clearly convey cost calculations, purpose of the costs, and correlate the costs to activities identified in the application. Where possible, the budget description should be keyed to tasks and deliverables from the proposal narrative. The Budget Table and Description **should not exceed 4 pages.**

The following budget tables and descriptions are provided as examples to follow. For additional guidance and examples, please see <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02>. Other formats are also acceptable if total costs per category and specific descriptions of costs are included. Applicants who do not use this optional format will not be penalized in the evaluation process.

### **Budget Table:**

I. Salary and Wages for Organization X Employees (Monthly Rate x Months x FTE)						
Name	Hourly Rate	Yr 1 Hours	Yr 2 Hours	Year 1	Year 2	Total
PM	\$60.00/hr	300	200	\$18,000	\$12,000	\$30,000
SLE 1	\$35.00/hr	200	100	\$7,000	\$3,500	\$10,500
SLE 2	\$35.00/hr	200	100	\$7,000	\$3,500	\$10,500
<b>TOTAL SALARY AND WAGES</b>				\$32,000	\$19,000	\$51,000
II. Fringe Benefits		Fringe Rate		Year 1	Year 2	Total
PM + 2 SLE		28%		\$8,960	\$5,320	\$14,280
<b>TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS</b>				\$8,960	\$5,320	\$14,280
III. Travel				Year 1	Year 2	Total
See budget justification				\$660	\$1,660	\$2,320
<b>TOTAL TRAVEL</b>				\$660	\$1,660	\$2,320
IV. Equipment				Year 1	Year 2	Total
See budget justification				\$1,209,500	\$0	\$1,209,500
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT</b>				\$1,209,500	\$0	\$1,209,500
V. Supplies				Year 1	Year 2	Total
See budget justification				\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
<b>TOTAL SUPPLIES</b>				\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
VI. Contractual				Year 1	Year 2	Total

Engineering support and design	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$45,000
<b>TOTAL CONTRACTUAL</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
TOTAL DIRECT	\$1,408,120	\$42,980	\$1,451,100
INDIRECT 0%	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,408,120</b>	<b>\$42,980</b>	<b>\$1,451,100</b>

Budget Description:

**TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$1,451,100**

**TOTAL EPA FUNDING REQUESTED: \$1,451,100**

**I. Senior Personnel:**

The County has requested 300 hours for Year 1 and 200 hours for Year 2. These costs are reasonable because the County pays the Project Manager (PM) at the same rate for activities that are not federally funded, and the Project Manager’s salary is consistent with the market rates for County employees in STEM fields.

	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Total</b>
Year 1	PM	\$60.00/hr	300	\$18,000
Year 2	PM	\$60.00/hr	200	\$12,000

Other Personnel:

Funds are requested to provide compensation for two staff-level employees (SLE) for 18 months of the project (1 year and six months) and will be managed by the Project Manager. These costs are reasonable because the County pays staff-level employees this rate regardless of the source of funding.

	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Total</b>
Year 1	SLE 1	\$35.00/hr	200	\$7,000
Year 1	SLE 2	\$35.00/hr	200	\$7,000
Year 2	SLE 1	\$35.00/hr	100	\$3,500
Year 2	SLE 2	\$35.00/hr	100	\$3,500

TOTAL PERSONNEL: \$51,000

**II. Fringe Benefits:**

Fringe benefits (to cover insurances, social security, and retirement) are requested at 28% of PM and two SLE salaries.

	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Total Salary</b>	<b>Fringe Rate</b>	<b>Fringe</b>
Year 1	PM & 2 SLE	\$32,000	28%	\$8,960
Year 2	PM & 2 SLE	\$19,000	28%	\$5,320

TOTAL FRINGE: \$14,280

### III. Travel

Travel funds requested are for trips to *X* and *Y*. These funds include daytrips and overnight trips. Travel will allow us to complete Tasks (*insert task number or description here*) and the deliverables (*insert deliverables name/number here*).

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Location(s)</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b># of Travelers</b>	<b>Rates</b>	<b>Cost</b>
2 daytrips to research XXX: Task 1 and 2	Insert locations here	Mileage	1	\$0.545/mile x 606 miles	\$660
2 overnight trips to conduct XXX: Task 3, Deliverable 1	Insert locations here	Lodging Mileage Per diem	4 4 4	\$91/night x 2 trips (3 rooms) \$0.545/mile x 222 miles x 2 trips \$42/day x 2 days	\$1,092 \$ 242 \$ 336

TOTAL TRAVEL: \$2,320

### IV. Equipment

The equipment costs to purchase equipment upgrades to the County Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) is necessary because *X*.

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Year 1	AI/Robotic Sorting	\$600,000
Year 1	Glass Breaker Screen	\$150,000
Year 1	Glass Sorting Equipment	\$100,000
Year 1	Controls and Wiring	\$90,000
Year 1	Supports, Platforms, and Stairs	\$100,000
Year 1	HVAC and Building Modifications	\$44,500
Year 1	Equipment Installation	\$125,000
Year 2	N/A	\$0
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,209,500</b>

Equipment installation is characterized as equipment because it is part of the purchase price.

**Build America, Buy America Act Compliance:** We have confirmed that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used as part of the optical sorter is produced in the US.

TOTAL EQUIPMENT: \$1,134,500

**V. Supplies**

Funds are requested for supplies in the amount of \$2,000 for Year 1 and \$2,000 for Year 2. Supplies will be utilized for Tasks (insert task number or description here) and the following deliverables (insert deliverables name/number here). These costs are reasonable because X.

TOTAL SUPPLIES: \$4,000

**VI. Contractual**

\$45,000 is requested for contractual costs, which includes both engineering design for MRF upgrades and ongoing support during and after equipment installation. These costs are reasonable because the consulting contract will be awarded competitively under the County’s purchase procedures. Price will be one factor in determining which consultant offers the best value for the project. We understand that the consultant rate must comply with the restrictions on consultant fees described in 2 CFR 1500.10.

**Build America, Buy America Act Compliance:** We have confirmed that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used as part of the optical sorter is produced in the US.

Year 1	Engineering Support/Design	\$30,000
Year 2	Engineering Support/Design	\$15,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>

TOTAL CONTRACTUAL: \$45,000

**VII. Indirect**

There are no indirect costs associated with the Count.

	<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>Total Indirect Costs</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
Year 1	\$1,408,120	\$0	\$1,408,120
Year 2	\$42,980	\$0	\$42,980
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,451,100</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,451,100</b>

TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS: \$0

## APPENDIX D: TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

*[Provide a schedule indicating start times and completion dates of significant tasks and responsibilities under your program. The following table is an **example** of a format from EPA’s Underground Storage Tank Program applicants may review when developing their own timelines and milestone chart that includes information that is specific to their proposed project. Other formats that clearly list the milestones and timelines are also acceptable. The Milestones **should not exceed one page. This Milestones page does not count towards the 11-page limit.**]*

### **Timeline and Milestones:**

<b>Timeline / Workflow</b> New actions for this Project <span style="background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> Existing program actions into which this project will be incorporated <span style="background-color: #A9A9A9; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	Winter 2018	2019												2020								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	
Outreach to businesses to participate in Cohorts																						
EcoData Tracking Workshops																						
Cohort site visits + technical assistance/P2 recommendations + assessment for tanks & supplies																						
Permit guidance created																						
BMP toolkits produced (incl. Metrics Calculator)																						
Issue tanks RFP																						
Contracts issued for tanks																						
Permit assistance																						
Training on tracking waste stream impacts																						
Cohort Meetings																						
Cohort tracking and implementation period																						
Asset management training																						
3 training videos; 1 of which will be on side-streaming																						
Reimbursements for tanks																						
Cohort follow-up site visits																						
Green Manufacturing training																						
Results analysis, review, & report writing																						