

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year 2023 National Wetland Program Development Grants

Announcement Type: Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-23-01

Assistance Listing Number: 66.462

COVID-19 Update: EPA is providing flexibilities to applicants experiencing challenges related to COVID-19. Please see the **Flexibilities Available to Organizations Impacted by COVID-19** clause in Section IV of [EPA's Solicitation Clauses](#).

Dates: All applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov as explained further in Section IV. Applications must be submitted by **11:59 P.M. ET March 27, 2023**. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Questions must be submitted in writing via email and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **March 17, 2023**. Written responses to questions will be posted on EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>.

Note to Applicants: If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your application to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goals of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Wetlands Program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the United States by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. Under the WPDGs, EPA seeks to build the capacity of all levels of government to develop or refine effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management. This announcement seeks applications from eligible applicants for projects that develop or refine state, tribal, territory, or local government wetland programs as a whole, or individual components of those programs.

As discussed in Section I.C, the statutory authority for the awards funded under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. All projects submitted under this announcement must be nationwide in scope or involve and/or otherwise benefit at least one state/tribe in at least two or more EPA Regions (a map of EPA Regions can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa#pane-4>).

Implementation projects are not eligible under this announcement.

B. NATIONAL PRIORITY AREA

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants for projects that develop or refine state, tribal, territory, or local government wetland programs as a whole, or individual components of those programs. Comprehensive wetland programs enable states, tribes, territories, or local governments to more effectively protect, restore, and manage their wetland resources. Each application submitted under this announcement must address the National Priority Area described below. Applicants may submit more than one complete application under this announcement for different projects as long as each one is

separately submitted and addresses the National Priority Area. EPA encourages all eligible applicants to apply and recognizes that new applicants are essential to expanding the pool of service providers able to address the environmental and financial challenges the nation faces. New applicants are applicants that have not received a National WPDG award from EPA in the past four years.

National Priority Area: Core Elements Framework

Experience with many state and tribal wetland programs has distilled a set of core elements, actions, and activities that together comprise a comprehensive wetland program. EPA has summarized these common core elements, actions, and activities in the *Core Elements of an Effective State and Tribal Wetlands Program Framework*, also called the *Core Elements Framework* (CEF). EPA's CEF can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/core-elements-effective-state-and-tribal-wetlands-programs>.

The CEF describes in greater detail each of the four core elements that comprise a comprehensive state/tribal wetland program. These four core elements are:

- Monitoring and assessment.
- Voluntary restoration and protection.
- Regulatory approaches, including CWA 401 certification.
- Wetland-specific water quality standards.

Under this National Priority Area, EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants for projects that are designed to support state, tribal, territory, and/or local government program officials, staff, and/or other interested stakeholders, and address state, tribal, territory, and/or local government wetland program development or refinement. These projects should help state, tribal, territory, and/or local governments determine and examine wetland-related needs (e.g., wetland loss of acreage or function¹, public perception of the value of wetlands, and management of wetland resources); program development needs (i.e., *Monitoring and Assessment, Voluntary Restoration/Protection, Regulatory Approaches, and Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*); and/or develop solutions to wetland-related challenges by creatively applying the full array of available planning, technical, outreach/education, and financial tools or developing such tools.

Accordingly, applicants must demonstrate in their application how the project will develop or refine a state, tribal, territory, or local government wetland program by indicating which core element(s) (i.e., *Monitoring and Assessment; Voluntary Restoration and Protection; Regulatory Approaches; and/or Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*) their application addresses. All projects submitted under this announcement must be nationwide in scope or involve and/or otherwise benefit at least one state/tribe in at least two or more EPA Regions (a map of EPA Regions can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa#pane-4>).

Examples of projects which could help develop or refine state, tribal, territory, or local government wetland programs under the Monitoring and Assessment Core Element include but are not limited to:

- Projects to conduct studies or provide training on how state, tribal, or territory wetlands monitoring methods and condition assessment data can be used to inform wetland management and decision making in support of the other three core elements (i.e., *Voluntary Restoration and Protection, Regulatory Approaches, and Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*).

¹ Wetland functions refer to the ecosystem processes that wetlands provide including, but not limited to, water quality improvement, floodwater storage, fish and wildlife habitat, biological productivity, and carbon sequestration. Carbon sequestration refers to process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide. Carbon sequestration is one of the many important functions of wetlands which provide a service to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

- Projects that develop the use of reference wetland condition or function data to test and calibrate wetland assessment methods.
- Projects using assessment data collected in the [National Wetland Condition Assessments](#) to develop the capacity of state, tribal, territory, or local governments to statistically analyze wetland monitoring data (e.g., wetland population estimates, indices of wetland condition, biological integrity, floristic quality, carbon flux, etc.).
- Projects that develop the use of Wetland Monitoring and Assessment data to statistically model and predict current and future wetland condition, function, or extent based on geographic factors or remotely sensed data especially hazard mitigation/flood/drought planning and climate change and resiliency (e.g., assessments of future wetland extent given climate change and potential migration corridors).
- Projects that develop electronic or online tools that streamline the collection, analysis, presentation, and/or effective communication of state and tribal monitoring and assessment data including hazard mitigation/flood/drought planning, climate change, and resiliency to others especially environmental justice² communities.
- Projects that develop Wetland Monitoring and Assessment or Wetland/Aquatic Resource Mapping regional work groups, including holding work group meetings or workshops.
- Projects to conduct studies on Wetland Monitoring and Assessment, including projects that provide information on the effects of hazard mitigation/flood/drought and climate change on wetland condition, function, or extent.
- Projects that provide training for state, tribal, territory, and/or local governments to map or update maps of wetlands using the National Wetland Mapping Standard or digitize the aquatic resource mapping information.
- Projects to conduct assessments of improved wetland mapping techniques, including extent, condition, and functions, particularly for difficult to map wetland types (e.g., forested wetlands) using the National Wetland Mapping Standard.
- Projects to conduct studies, develop tools, or provide training for state, tribal, territory, and/or local governments to assess streamflow duration or surface water flows for various aquatic resources, either in the field or through remote sensing or modeling, including projects to assess the variability of flows over time including climate change effects.
- Projects to conduct assessments of location and severity of tidal restrictions or artificial wetland migration restrictions to assist state, tribal, territory, and/ or local governments to assess impacts, restoration potential and potential effects of climate change.

Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of the Monitoring and Assessment Core Element.

Examples of projects which could help develop or refine state, tribal, territory, or local government wetland programs under the Voluntary Restoration and Protection Core Element include but are not limited to:

² EPA defines “environmental justice” as 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 that no one group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal environmental programs, and policies. Meaningful involvement means that: (1) potentially affected community residents have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health; (2) the public’s contribution can influence the regulatory agency’s decision; (3) the concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision-making process; and (4) the decision-makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

- Projects to develop methods to identify wetlands to protect/restore that may be affected by climate change/flood/drought, or areas that are likely to become wetlands due to sea level rise/wetland migration and/or increased storm events including consideration of environmental justice or the use of Indigenous Knowledge/Traditional Ecologic Knowledge.
- Projects to develop work groups, processes or mechanisms to enhance collaboration efforts among stakeholders (including land trust organizations, state wildlife agencies, local governments, agriculture agencies, communities with environmental justice concerns, etc.) to share/integrate differing priorities and missions that will affect wetland voluntary restoration/protection (e.g., watershed plans, nonpoint source management plans, State Wildlife Action Plans, etc.) especially considering hazard mitigation/flood/drought planning, climate change, and resiliency.
- Projects to develop or share tools to identify areas with high restoration potential or restoration practices that take into consideration Indigenous Knowledge/Traditional Ecologic Knowledge, the effects of climate change, and/or benefits to communities with environmental justice concerns and provide this information through a variety of media.
- Projects that study and develop tools or processes on the effects and benefits of position or placement of wetlands across the landscape on watershed or ecological condition or function.
- Projects that test or improve approaches to reduce shoreline hardening and/or enhance coastal resiliency using nature-based solutions such as coastal marsh restoration, removal of tidal restrictions for marsh restoration, removal of artificial restrictions for wetland migration, or living shorelines, including considerations of Indigenous Knowledge/Traditional Ecologic Knowledge and climate change effects.
- Projects that develop tools and procedures to evaluate the ecological effectiveness of different restoration efforts, such as establishment, re-establishment, enhancement, and rehabilitation including consideration of climate change effects and/or Indigenous Knowledge/Traditional Ecologic Knowledge.
- Projects that develop tools for long-term maintenance and protection of voluntary restoration sites including guidance specific to wetland types and land uses (e.g., urban, rural, or areas in proximity to agriculture or silviculture operations) as well as consideration of climate change effects and/or include Indigenous Knowledge/Traditional Ecologic Knowledge.
- Projects to develop tools or procedures to assess benefits to communities with environmental justice concerns from voluntary restoration.
- Projects to study innovative finance options to advance wetlands protection and restoration (such as State Revolving Funds (SRFs), special area overlays, or local taxes) to create protection funds that protect identified wetlands.
- Projects to incorporate monitoring data into agency decision-making including the development of wetland protection, restoration and management plans which identify and prioritize management areas, including potential impacts from climate change (e.g., planning of coastal wetland migration corridors).

Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of the Voluntary Restoration and Protection Core Element.

Examples of projects which could help develop or refine state, tribal, territory, or local government wetland programs under the Regulatory Approaches Core Element include but are not limited to:

- Projects that develop or enhance permitting programs for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the state, tribe, or territory including consideration of climate change effects, environmental justice concerns, and/or Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- Projects to facilitate the assumption of the CWA section 404 permitting program by states and tribes.

- Projects that develop new mechanisms for coordinating wetland protection across state, tribal, territory, and/or local regulatory agencies or levels of government (e.g., integrating assessment of wetland presence into municipal building permit approval processes, increasing collaboration between a wetland program and forestry commission on silviculture BMPs for forested wetlands, or using fish surveys and state designation of trout streams to protect riparian corridors and wetlands).
- Projects to develop tools or procedures to evaluate the ecological performance of wetland/stream compensatory mitigation projects (e.g., mitigation banks, in-lieu fee projects and permittee-responsible mitigation) including consideration of climate change effects and/or Indigenous Knowledge/Traditional Ecologic Knowledge.
- Projects to conduct studies or provide training on how wetland monitoring methods can be used to answer large scale (i.e., regional or national) questions about the performance of wetlands created, restored, or protected through the compensatory mitigation process and provide this information through a variety of media.
- Projects to develop tools and/or guides to incorporate wetland considerations into broader watershed or Integrated Water Resource Management planning and watershed management goals, including to guide permitting and restoration priorities, as well as, reflecting the contribution and role of rare types of water resources for mitigating flood or drought effects on the broader aquatic ecosystem and communities with environmental justice concerns.
- Projects that will develop and support a sustained discussion forum on the consideration of environmental justice in state, tribal, or territory CWA section 401 programs.
- Projects to develop tools or systems to track impacts from dredged or fill activities, resulting from pollution, growth stressors, or climate change effects.

Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of the Regulatory Approaches Core Element.

Examples of projects which could help develop or refine state, tribal, territory, or local government wetland programs under the Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards Core Element include but are not limited to:

- Projects to describe and broadly communicate the state of the science for establishing water quality standards for wetlands including workshops and conferences.
- Projects to conduct studies and provide training on model approaches for selecting wetland-specific designated uses and supporting criteria.
- Projects to identify ways that states and tribes with limited resources can approach the development of water quality standards for wetlands and provide this information through a variety of media.
- Projects that will develop and support a sustained discussion forum for studying differing aspects of developing and promulgating wetland water quality standards among a variety of interested non-federal stakeholders including communities with environmental justice concerns.
- Projects to demonstrate or develop tools that show how monitoring and assessment data can be used in the development of state, tribal, territory wetland water quality standards.
- Projects that demonstrate or develop tools and training on the use of the *Narrative Templates for Wetland Water Quality Standards* as a basis for developing new state/tribal/territory wetland water quality standards.

Please note that applicants may propose other projects that are authorized under section 104(b)(3) of the CWA that further the goals of the Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards Core Element.

Funds awarded under this announcement for training sessions, work group meetings, or workshops may be used by recipients to promote participation and to support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel. Assistance funds awarded under this announcement may be used by the successful applicant to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees at training sessions, work group meetings, or workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests for non-federal attendees and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of non-federal attendees who receive travel assistance.

The applicant will select meeting locations, secure meeting facilities (e.g., meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop meeting agendas and materials, and select the speakers. Applicants should include in their description how they propose to deliver in-person training workshops under normal circumstances and how they will deliver the trainings if in-person training is not possible due to impacts related to natural disasters and/or health emergencies, such as COVID-19 (e.g., under quarantine situations, if social distancing is required in your locale). Alternative training workshops due to the impacts of natural disasters and/or health emergencies, such as COVID-19 may include switching from in-person formats to online only or reducing the number of participants in each training to allow participants to be located six feet apart from each other.

If EPA co-sponsors one or more of these events EPA will do so in accordance with a co-sponsorship agreement developed between EPA and the recipient. EPA will support these events as a co-sponsor by providing technical assistance, promotion of the events, review of agendas, and printed materials. The successful applicant will be responsible for determining any registration fees and for establishing and managing a waiver process of any fees for specific individuals (e.g., speakers, tribal officials, etc.). The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training sessions, meetings, or workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

In their applications, applicants should describe the technical approach to addressing the National Priority Area described above. The application should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project elements. The application should also include a description of the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results, methods, and/or effective strategies to state, tribal, territory, and/or local governmental agencies, and/or other interested stakeholders so that the others can better build their wetland programs. Examples of ways to transfer results include:

- i. Share results on a website and share the website address with relevant organizations.
- ii. Present results at forums typically attended by representatives from state, tribal, territory, and/or local government wetland programs.
- iii. Document how you intend to share results with relevant state, tribal, territory, and/or local government wetland program.
- iv. Conduct a webinar or other outreach to state/tribes/local governments at relevant conferences.

Effective partnerships are important for the success of projects under this announcement. In their applications, applicants should identify appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project. If you choose not to partner, applications will be evaluated based on how the applicant demonstrates how project outputs and outcomes will be accomplished successfully without partners. Applicants should also include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. If the applicant chooses to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants), please pay careful attention to the information to the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation->

[clauses](#) before doing so as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless the applicant selects them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Partnerships between organizations can greatly benefit from one another's experience and expertise.

C. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these assistance agreements to improving wetland programs by: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Projects that are demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches where the results of demonstration projects will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained from the demonstration projects. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

Funds received under this announcement cannot be used for the purchase of land or conservation easements. Application tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit (e.g., CWA section 404 permit, CWA section 402 permit, CWA section 401 certification) or federal, state, tribal, territory, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are not eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed only for the purposes of treating wastewater or stormwater. Funds cannot be used to fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property. Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes, etc.) and office furniture are not eligible for funding under this program. The lease of vehicles may be eligible for funding but is contingent on justification of need in the application narrative. Funds cannot be used for activities to implement a wetlands program, for fundraising, or for gifts. Projects must be performed entirely within the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories (i.e., Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa). Proposed projects must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

Wetland mapping as part of a project to develop a state, tribal, territory, or local government program to research, investigate, experiment, train, demonstrate, survey, and study the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution is eligible for funding. Funds used for mapping wetlands must use the "National Wetland Mapping Standard" ([FGDC Wetland Mapping Standard](#)) developed by a work group of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and cannot be used for mapping of wetlands that do not use this standard. Applicants can propose to form "Wetland Mapping Coalitions" to fund regional (two or more states and/or tribes) mapping efforts.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The activities to be funded under this announcement support [EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#). Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 5 - Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities: Provide clean and safe water for all communities and protect our nation's waterbodies from degradation, Objective 5.2: Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds: Address sources of water pollution and ensure water quality standards are protective of the health and needs of all people and ecosystems. (available at <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>).

All proposed projects must demonstrate a linkage to the Strategic Plan priorities and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring and protecting aquatic ecosystems.

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Expected environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement period of performance.

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

- Criteria for assessing the condition of wetlands (qualitative – may be measured as whether criteria have been developed).
- Tools and/or guides to help state, tribal, territory, and/or local government decision makers integrate wetland protection into broader watershed or Integrated Water Resource Management planning taken into account environmental justice and climate change issues (quantitative – may be measured as number of tools developed or number of organizations receiving materials).
- Organization and administration of workshops to educate and train partners especially communities with environmental justice concerns (e.g., workshops for local governments on ordinances to protect wetlands) (qualitative – may be measured by attendee comments or evaluations, or quantitative – number of attendees).
- Methods and/or criteria protocols to assess the success of a mitigation site (qualitative – may be measured by whether methods have been developed).
- Methods to develop water quality standards (qualitative – may be measured by whether methods have been developed).
- Smartphone or tablet apps to facilitate monitoring data collection and sharing (qualitative – may be measured by whether methods have been developed).
- Protocols and/or guides to assess, prioritize, and/or track (report on) voluntary restoration sites (qualitative – may be measured by whether tracking system has been developed).

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

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

- Increase in knowledge (may be measured by pre- and post-training assessments).
- Enhanced knowledge of wetland location, extent, type and change via updating of existing wetland maps or creation of new maps (may be measured by number of additional wetland polygons mapped to the FGDC standard see Section **VIII. C. WETLANDS MAPPING STANDARD**).
- Improved wetland protection efforts (may be measured in percent of protection sites meeting performance criteria).

- Application of informed, scientifically valid approaches to watershed or Integrated Water Resource Management planning that will protect, prevent, and reduce pollution to wetlands and other aquatic resources (may be measured through the use of decision framework or model analysis).
- Increased understanding of how to ensure “no net loss” in quality and quantity of wetlands in the CWA section 404 regulatory program (assessment of wetland function and condition).

As part of the application workplan, applicants are required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency’s Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA’s definition of environmental results in terms of outputs and outcomes can be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/linking-assistance-agreements-environmental-results>.

E. 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 (usually in Section VII) to obtain the provisions.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

The total amount of expected federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$660,000 (\$330,000 expected from FY 2022 and \$330,000 expected from FY 2023), depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost (see Section III.B for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match requirement).

It is anticipated that approximately three to six awards will be incrementally funded under this announcement. The federal portion of the awards for projects selected will range from \$75,000 to \$220,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the projects. It is anticipated that awards under this announcement will have one to four year project periods.

EPA is prioritizing making awards to multiple applicants and anticipates making no more than two awards to any one applicant (see Section V.B. for additional details). New applicants may help to expand the pool of grantees advancing improvements in wetland program. New applicants are applicants that have not received a National WPDG award from EPA in the past four years.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund 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.

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

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

Successful applicant(s) will be issued a grant or cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the recipient's performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance.
2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work.
3. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements.
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient).
5. Review and comment on content of task/deliverables and reports/publications (printed or electronic) prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants under this announcement are non-profit organizations³, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs. Non-profit private universities and colleges and non-profit institutions of higher education are considered non-profit organizations and are eligible under this announcement.

Individual states, tribes, local governments, and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply under this announcement. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. EPA may ask applicants to demonstrate that they are eligible for funding under this announcement including demonstrating that they are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs.

Interstate agencies are defined and must meet the requirements of CWA Section 502 as "an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." Interstate agencies may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority which establishes their status.

³ *Non-profit organization*, as defined by 2 CFR Part 200.1, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that: (1) is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that 2 CFR Part 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of nonprofit because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a nonprofit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible.

An intertribal consortium is a partnership between two or more tribes that is authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance (see 40 CFR Part 35.502.) and must meet the requirements of [40 CFR Part 35.504](#). An intertribal consortium is eligible only if the consortium demonstrates that all of its members meet the eligibility requirements and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance in accordance with 40 CFR Part 35.504 at the time of application submission. An intertribal consortium must submit with its application to EPA adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the consortium by its members to apply for and receive the grant (see 40 CFR Part 35.504.).

Nonprofit organizations may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a nonprofit organization in 2 CFR Part 200.70 (nonprofit organizations).

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must demonstrate in their application how they will contribute a minimum non-federal cost share/match of 25 percent of the total project costs (***total federal share and applicant cost share/match***) in accordance with 40 CFR Parts 35.385 and 35.615. This means that EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost.

The cost share/match may be provided in cash or can come from in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, and expertise, subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 CFR Part 200.306 as applicable. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. The cost share/match must be for eligible and allowable project costs. Cost share/matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and must be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the workplan. All grant funds are subject to federal audit and are subject to the regulations governing cost share/matching fund requirements at 2 CFR Part 200.306. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of funding restrictions are outlined in Section I.C and III.D of this announcement) also apply to the use of cost share/matching funds. Other federal grants may not be used as cost share/match without specific statutory authority. **Applicants that do not demonstrate how they will meet the minimum 25 percent cost share/match requirement in their application will not be considered for funding.**

The minimum cost share/match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four. EPA will use the following formula:

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

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$100,000 in order to meet the 25 percent cost share/match requirement, the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions and would receive a maximum of \$75,000 in federal funds from EPA.

OR

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

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

A cost share/match calculator can be found at the WPDG website at <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-and-epa-wetlands-grant-coordinators>.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., B., and C. to be considered eligible. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applications must **substantially** comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application workplan, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.C.5 establishes a ten (10)-page, single-spaced application workplan page limit that includes the cover page. If a double-spaced application workplan is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 10 single-spaced (20 page double-spaced) page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed.
2. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A, ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS, of this announcement.
3. An applicant must demonstrate that they can meet the cost share/match requirements in Section III.B of this announcement in the application.
4. All applications submitted under this announcement must be for projects that address the National Priority Area listed in Section I.B. Applicants may submit more than one complete application under this announcement as long as each application is for a different project, is separately submitted, and addresses the National Priority Area. In addition, applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will develop or refine a state/tribal local government wetland program by indicating which core element(s) their application addresses (*i.e.*, *Monitoring and Assessment*; *Voluntary Restoration and Protection*; *Regulatory Approaches*; and/or *Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*).
5. All projects submitted under this announcement must be nationwide in scope or involve and/or otherwise benefit at least one state/tribe in at least two or more EPA Regions (a map of EPA Regions can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa#pane-4>).
6. Applications must be for projects that improve wetland programs by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. **Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.** Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained from the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration project.
7. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible activities set forth in Section III.D, 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.
8. Applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) as specified in Section IV, APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION, of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.

9. Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant Sam.gov system issues and not the applicant. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Myra Price at WPDG-RFA@epa.gov within 5 business days after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

D. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

If an application is submitted that has ineligible tasks, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding. Ineligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- Payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property.
- The purchase of land or conservation easements.
- Application tasks that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit (e.g., CWA section 404 permit, CWA section 402 permit, CWA section 401 certification) or federal, state, tribal, territory, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are **not** eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks.
- Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs.
- Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed for the purposes of only treating wastewater or stormwater.
- Purchase of any type of equipment including vehicles, boats, motor homes office furniture valued at \$5,000 or more is not eligible for funding.
- Lease of a vehicle(s) may be permitted but is contingent on justification of need in the application narrative.
- Activities to implement a wetlands program, for fundraising, or for gifts.
- Activities outside the 50 United States, Tribal Lands, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories (i.e., Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa).

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

A. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

a. Requirement 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 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.gov⁴ 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 a 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 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

⁴ Login.gov a secure sign in service used by the public to sign into Federal Agency systems including SAM.gov and Grants.gov. For help with login.gov accounts you should visit <http://login.gov/help>.

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](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or 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 EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than March 27, 2023 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 will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through 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.

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 Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
2. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
3. Send an email with EPA-OW-OWOW-22-04 in the subject line to WPDG-RFA@epa.gov **before** the application deadline time and date and **must** include the following:
 - a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
 - b. Description of the issue
 - c. The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. 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 or email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

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

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.
5. Project Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form) prepared as described in Section IV of the announcement.

Optional Documents: (Not counted in the as part of the page limit.)

6. Other Attachments Form – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable .
7. Other Attachment Form – Letters of Commitment, if applicable.
8. Other Attachments Form – Biographical sketches of major project managers, support staff members, or other major project participants for the proposed projects.

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Myra Price at 202-566-1225. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

B. CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very carefully and address all requirements. A complete application package must include the following documents described below.

1. Standard Form 424 (SF-424), Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments.

2. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A), Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs

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

3. EPA Form 5700-54, Key Contacts.

Complete the form. Attach additional forms as needed.

4. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report.

Complete the form. There are no attachments

5. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) – See [EPA’s Indirect Cost Guidance](#) for additional information.

6. Project Narrative

The Project Narrative, Sections A-E below, must be limited to no more than ten (10) single-spaced typewritten 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper) (**except** for documents specifically excluded from the page limit below). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the Project Narrative. Additional pages beyond the 10-page single-spaced page limit will not be considered. If a double-spaced Project Narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 10 single-spaced (20 page double-spaced) page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials (such as letters of support from potential partners and biographical sketches) are not included within the page limit for the Project Narrative. Any documentation pertaining to Quality Assurance/Quality Control and Invasive Species Control is also not included in the page limit for the Project Narrative.

The Project Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below in items A-E. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the Project Narrative.

A. Cover Page (included in the page limit) including:

- a. Name of applicant.
- b. Project title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less).
- c. List of all potential partners associated with the project.
- d. Indicate the core element(s) addressed in the application (*e.g., Monitoring and Assessment; Voluntary Restoration and Protection; Regulatory Approaches; and/or Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*).
- e. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., email address and phone number).
- f. Geographic location (indicate if the project is nationwide or indicate the states/tribes/location that are involved and/or otherwise benefited by the project and in which EPA Regions they are located).
- g. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested, the non-federal cost share/match, and the total project cost).
- h. Abstract/project summary (the abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the project. It should also include a listing of the main tasks to be accomplished, and a description of the final product(s). The entire abstract should be 250 words or less).

B. Project Description containing:

- a. National Priority Area: Describe the approach for addressing the National Priority Area in Section I.B of this announcement. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project elements. Outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals. If travel assistance is to be provided for non-federal attendees at training sessions, work group meetings, or workshops, describe the process for selecting non-federal attendees who may receive travel assistance.
- b. Environmental Results and Measuring Progress:

- i. Stated Objective/Link to the EPA Strategic Plan - Describe the objective of the project (outcomes) and products (outputs) and the linkage to the EPA's FY 2022 – FY 2026 Strategic Plan Goal 5 - Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities: Provide clean and safe water for all communities and protect our nation's waterbodies from degradation specifically Objective 5.2: Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds (See Section I.D, ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN, of this announcement).
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) – List the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and describe an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements that will be accomplished as a result of the project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of workplan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).
- c. Geographic Location: Describe how the project is nationwide or how it involves and/or otherwise benefits at least one state/tribe in at least two or more EPA Regions.
- d. Milestone Schedule: Provide a projected milestone schedule that covers each year of the proposed project period (one to four years). The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant. Include an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.
- e. Partnerships: Describe the appropriate and necessary partnerships (agencies/organizations) that you will partner with to successfully conduct the project. Include a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks. Describe how these partnerships will contribute to the success of the project. If you choose to identify any partner entities who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants), please refer to the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses> before doing so as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless you select them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. Letters of support from potential partners are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the Project Narrative. If appropriate, describe how having no partners is the best approach and how project outputs and outcomes will be accomplished successfully without partners.
- f. Transfer of Results: Provide a brief description of how the applicant will actively transfer the results, methods, and/or effective strategies to state, tribal, territory, or local governmental agencies, and/or other interested stakeholders to better build their wetland programs. Letters of support from potential partners especially those that will make use of the project's results are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the Project Narrative. Examples of ways to actively transfer results can be found in Section I.B.
- g. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) (not counted in page limit for the Project Narrative): If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control

requirements (see Section VIII.A, QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC), of this announcement for additional information).

Note: Development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required of all EPA assistance agreements that fund data collection and/or assessment and information analysis. The cost of the QAPP development should be included in the project budget.

- h. Invasive Species Control (not counted in page limit for the Project Narrative): If applicable, describe how you will ensure that your project does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. Explain how you would respond if an invasive species problem occurs in relation to your project. (See Section VIII.D, INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL, of this announcement for additional information).

- C. **Detailed Budget Narrative** – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task. Please see [EPA’s Budget Development Guidance](#) which includes a sample budget. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A such as “other” and “contractual”. All subaward funding should be located under the “other” cost category. If applicable, Participant Support costs are captured in the “other” cost category, and may include, for example, training fees or travel assistance for non-federal conference, training or workshop participants. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings throughout the proposed project period in the “travel” cost category. Total costs must include separate breakdowns for federal and cost share/matching (non-federal) components. For each cost category, indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by EPA and what portion of the cost will be covered by the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match as required in Section III.B. Budget information may be provided in table format if the applicant chooses but all budget information must be included within the page limit. Letters of support from partners providing cost share/match are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the Project Narrative. Describe each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine cost-effectiveness, reasonableness and allowability of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Helpful tips on writing a budget may be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02>.

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

D. Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/ Qualifications

- a. **Staff Expertise/Qualifications** - Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). (Biographical sketches of the applicant’s key staff are also encouraged but not required, should be provided as attachments using the Other Attachments Form, and are not counted in the page limit for the Project Narrative).
- b. **Organizational Experience** - Provide a brief description of the applicant’s organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and the organization’s infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.

- E. **Past Performance** - Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your

organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and:

- a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
- b. Your history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

Note: In evaluating applicant’s past performance, the Agency 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). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in the application that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see Section V.A.).

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

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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

A. EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

Point Values	Evaluation Criteria
25 points	1) National Priority Area Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality of the approach to addressing the National Priority Area described in Section I.B. of this announcement.
20 points	2) Environmental Results and Measuring Progress Under these sub-criteria, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate each of the following sub-criterion: A. application demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results, the objective of the project (outcomes), and products (outputs), and linkage to EPA’s Strategic Plan Goal 5 - Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities: Provide clean and safe water for all communities and protect our nation’s

	<p>waterbodies from degradation specifically Objective 5.2: Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds (10 points)</p> <p>B. the application demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement). (10 points)</p>
15 points	<p>3) Milestone Schedule/Detailed Budget</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the application demonstrates each of the following sub-criteria:</p> <p>A. The adequacy and completeness of the milestone schedule for project tasks, including timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks. In addition, whether there is a clearly articulated approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner will also be evaluated. (10 points)</p> <p>B. The reasonableness and cost-effectiveness of all costs in the budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. Total costs must include both federal and cost share/matching (non-federal) components. (5 points)</p>
10 points	<p>4) Project Partnerships</p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project including whether they have provided a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks, and how these partnerships will contribute to the success of the project. If no partners will be used in project performance you will be evaluated based on how you demonstrate how project outputs and outcomes will be accomplished successfully without partners. (10 points)</p>
10 points	<p>5) Transfer of Results</p> <p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well it demonstrates the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results, methods, and/or effective strategies to state, tribe, local agencies, and/or other interested stakeholders so that the others can better build their wetland programs. (10 points)</p>
10 points	<p>6) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/ Qualifications</p> <p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <p>A. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their infrastructure as it relates to the ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points)</p> <p>B. Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points).</p>
10 points	<p>7) Past Performance</p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p>

	<p>A. past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). (5 points)</p> <p>B. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C 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. (5 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under A. and B. above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and/or prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history must indicate that in the application and they will receive a neutral score for the factor (i.e., 2.5 points for subcriterion A and B).</p> <p>Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your application that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for each subcriterion.</p>
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B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

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

A panel(s) comprised of EPA staff will review the eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. A ranking list will be developed based on the panel evaluations. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes the final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the application score/ranking and may also take into account geographical distribution of funds, diversity of projects, program priorities, and availability of funds. EPA reserves the right to make no more than two awards to any high-ranking applicants, depending on funding availability and geographic distribution. New applicants may help to expand the pool of grantees advancing improvements in wetland program. New applicants are applicants that have not received a National WPDG award from EPA in the past four years.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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

A. AWARD NOTICES

Following EPA’s evaluation of the applications, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the

Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance 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- EPA's Grants and Interagency Agreements Management Division. Applicants are cautioned that only an Award Official is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA Award Official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by 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.

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

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement.
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component.
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment.
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with Part 35.115 of 40 CFR.
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

A listing of successful applications will be posted at the following website address <https://wgd.epa.gov> . Information about this announcement can be found <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>. Deadline extensions or other modifications, if any, will be posted on this website and <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>.

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, EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines separate proposals for different tasks/activities.

C. REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF FINAL WORKPLAN

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

1. Project components to be funded under the assistance agreement.
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each component.
3. Commitments for each component and a timeframe for their accomplishment.
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with 40 CFR Part 35.115.
5. Roles and responsibilities of the successful applicant and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the commitments.
6. Project location information for any assistance agreement-funded project based on the geographic scale and intent of the project. and
7. Breakdown of federal funds by "project category." Project Categories can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-category-definitions>.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

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

E. DISPUTES

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-competition-dispute-resolution-procedures>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII, AGENCY CONTACT of the announcement.

F. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 120 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the workplan consistent with 2 CFR Parts 200.329 and 1500, and 40 CFR Part 45, as appropriate. This includes any problems, issues or difficulties encountered that may affect the quality requirements of the project. The recipient must indicate what if any corrective actions were taken. Award recipients will be required to submit the final report electronically and should include, in addition, a 1–2-page project summary. If travel assistance is provided to selected attendees, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the meetings.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

In accordance with the EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, the EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in Section VII 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 a final eligibility determination. Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via email and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **March 27, 2023**, and written responses will be posted on the EPA Wetlands website at <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>.

Agency Contact

Myra Price

Email: WPDG-RFA@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements apply to these grants (see 2 CFR Part 1500.12). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Successful applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. See Section VII, AGENCY CONTACTS for Agency Contact information for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

If water quality data is generated, successful applicants must ensure all water quality data generated in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan, either directly or by subaward, are transmitted into the Agency's Water Quality Exchange (WQX) data system (formerly known as STORET) annually or by project completion. When uploading data through WQX or WQXweb, data should be identified as WPDG grant-related by providing project ID WPDG in the data submission. More information about WQX and WQXweb, including tutorials, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/storage-and-retrieval-and-water-quality-exchange>.

B. DATA SHARING

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.

C. WETLANDS MAPPING STANDARD

A national wetlands mapping standard was developed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) with input from dozens of federal agencies and led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and EPA. The objective of the FGDC Wetlands Mapping Standard is to support the accurate mapping and classification of wetlands while ensuring mechanisms for their revision and update as directed under U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Circular A-16](#). In accordance with OMB Circular A-16, all wetlands mapping projects funded through the federal government must comply with the FGDC Wetlands Mapping Standard. (Non-federally funded wetlands mapping projects are also encouraged to comply with the standard). Standard compliant data will be added to the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) geospatial dataset and displayed on the Wetlands Mapper (<https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>). Detailed information on the wetlands mapping standard, which includes mandatory use of the "Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States" can be found at: [FGDC Wetland Mapping Standard](#) (FGDC-STD-015-2009), "Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States," can be found at [FGDC Wetlands Mapping Standard](#) (FGDC-STD-015-2009).

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

D. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

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

E. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about this announcement, including information about deadline extensions or other modifications, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants> and [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).