



EJ Collaborative
Problem-Solving
Cooperative Agreement
Program
(EJCPS)

Pre-application
Assistance Webinar

EPA-R-OEJECR-OCS-23-01
Office of Environmental Justice & External Civil Rights
February 2, 2023

Webinar Agenda

- A. Zoom Housekeeping, EPA Staff and Interpreters
- B. Purpose of the EJCPS program
- C. Funding & Award Information (Section II)
- D. Eligibility (Section III)
- E. Funding Opportunity Description (Section I)
- F. Contents of a Full Application Package (Section IV)
- G. Evaluation Criteria (Section V)
 - Upcoming Amendment to the RFA
 - Things to consider when addressing each criteria
- H. General Q & A

Zoom Meeting Best Practices

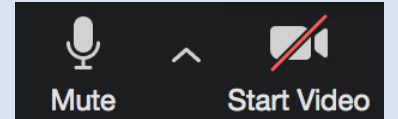
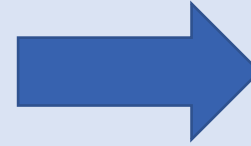


- *Use “raise hand”* or chat feature to indicate you would like to comment/speak
- Turn off microphone when you are not talking (Mute)

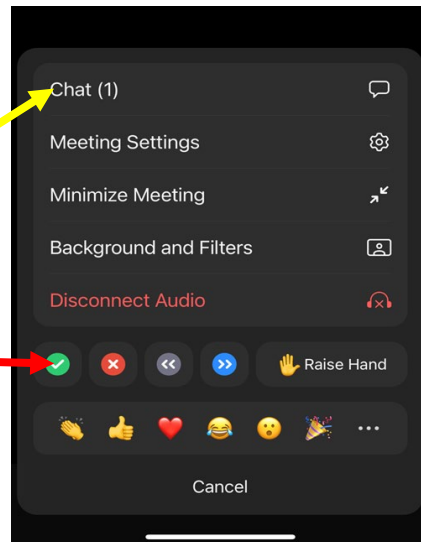
Questions



Use the toolbar to unmute

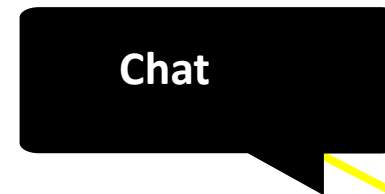


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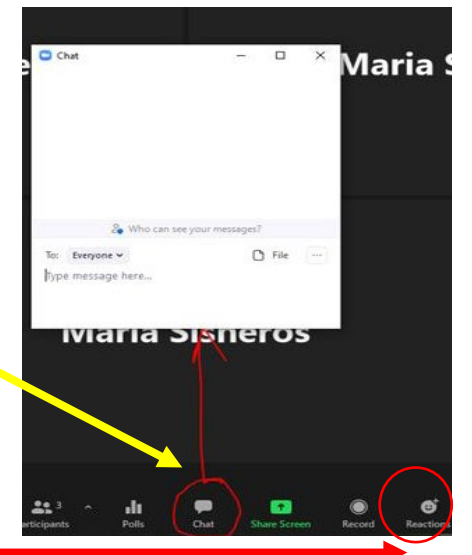


Raise hand

Computer



Raise hand



Zoom Housekeeping

- A. This meeting is being recorded and will be posted on the [EJCPS](#) webpage
- B. Remember to keep your line muted if you're not asking a question
- C. Interpreter Channels for Spanish Speakers
- D. To ask Questions, please:
 - Raise your Hand using the Zoom Controls, then unmute when called on
 - Those with raised hands will be called on first before we go to the Chat
 - Option to type your question into the Chat
- E. Quick Introductions of EPA staff (OEJECR and OGC) and Interpreters

Topics to be covered in this section:

- Purpose of the EJCPS program
- Definition of a CBO
- Funding Totals and Award Information
- Eligibility – Who can apply directly for an EJCPS award
- Partnerships (IRA and/or Traditional EJ partnerships)
- SAM.gov and Grants.gov registration requirement

Purpose of EJCPSP Program

I. Direct funding to CBOs

- a. The EJCPSP program provides an opportunity for community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs) to manage federal grant dollars directly
- b. EPA provides direct training and support to CBOs in the management of federal dollars.
- c. If selected, an EPA Project Officer will plan and meet with you regularly. **You are not alone!!**

II. Collaboration with partners and coalition-building

- a. Applicants must utilize EPA's [EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving Model](#) in their proposal and the management of their project (if selected)
- b. Applicants are **strongly** encouraged to propose projects where they collaborate with other community stakeholders (e.g., local businesses and industry, local government, medical service providers, academia, etc.).

Purpose of EJCPS Program (cont.)

III. Projects addressing disproportionate environmental/public health issues

- a. Projects should develop solutions that will significantly address environmental and/or public health issue(s) in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms and risks
- b. Proposals must include relevant information such as demographics, geographic location, and community history.
- c. EPA **strongly** encourages the use of EPA's [EJSCREEN 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.
- d. EJSCREEN Office Hours, Training Schedule, and Past Recordings are available here:
<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/ejscreen-office-hours-training>

Funding Opportunity (Section I)

pages 2 – 15 of the RFA

I. Definition of a Community Based Nonprofit Organization (CBO):

- a. a public or private nonprofit organization that supports and/or represents a community and/or certain populations within a community through engagement, education, and other related services provided to individual community residents and community stakeholders. A “community” can be characterized by a particular geographic area and/or by the relationships among members with similar interests and can be characterized as part of a broader national or regional community where organizations can be focused on the needs of urban, rural, and/or tribal areas, farmworkers, displaced workers, children with high levels of lead, people with asthma, subsistence fishers, and other similar groups. **Only entities that qualify as community-based nonprofit organizations are eligible for funding under this RFA.**

II. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding

- a. 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) created the Environmental and Climate Justice block grant program in section 138 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and provided EPA with \$2.8 billion in grant funding for the program for projects to benefit disadvantaged communities.

Funding & Award Information (Section II)

pages 16 – 17 of RFA

I. Total Funding

- a. Approximately \$30 million available for approximately 80 projects nationwide ranging from \$150,000 - \$500,000

II. Funding Breakdown/Number of Awards / Funding Tracks

- a. \$25 million available for CBOs and/or CBO partnerships proposing projects for up to \$500,000 each (~50 projects nationwide)
- b. \$5 million available for small CBOs (5 or fewer full-time employees) proposing projects for up to \$150,000 (~30 projects nationwide)

III. Length of Project & Other Award Details

- a. Project Period is 3 years - Start Date = October 1, 2023
 - a. All funds must be drawn down by the end of the 3-year project period
 - b. **No extensions are allowed!! (This is a statutory limitation)**
- b. Cooperative Agreements – substantial EPA involvement & oversight

Eligibility (Section III)

pages 17 – 20 of RFA

I. Who is eligible to apply to the EJGPS program?

- a. a community-based nonprofit organization (CBO); or
- b. a partnership of community-based nonprofit organizations

NOTE - The EJGPS opportunity is only for CBOs to apply to directly

II. Who is ineligible to apply directly? (but applicants may collaborate with these entities)

- a. Tribes and tribal governments; US Territories and Freely associated states; International Organizations; Institutions of Higher Education; Hospitals; States, local governments, and quasi-governmental entities
- b. Although ineligible to apply directly, these entities can be partners on EJGPS projects via financial partnerships (subawards or contracts) or non-financial partnerships (in-kind work)

Eligibility (Section III)

pages 17 – 20 of RFA

I. Partnerships with CBOs and other community stakeholders are strongly encouraged

- a. Partnerships are not required but are expected in the EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving program
- b. All Partnerships documented in the workplan should be accompanied with a Letter of Commitment

II. Types of Partnerships

- a. IRA-qualifying partnerships (FOR ELIGIBILITY PURPOSES) = partnerships where the applying CBO provides a subaward to the partnering CBO
 - i. The Inflation Reduction Act legislation states that CBOs and/or partnerships of CBOs can receive IRA funds (see RFA for more details)
- b. Traditional EJ Partnerships
 - a. Non-financial relationships with CBOs where a subaward is not present (i.e., in-kind services)
 - b. Non-financial relationships with non-CBOs (i.e., in-kind services)
 - c. Financial relationships with non-CBOs (i.e., subawards or contracts)
- c. Both IRA-qualifying partnerships and Traditional EJ partnerships are encouraged in the EJPCS program
- d. EPA strongly recommends that applicants have THREE partners from THREE different stakeholder groups

Registering on SAM.gov and Grants.gov

pages 19 – 23 of the RFA

I. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov

- a. Applicants must register on SAM.gov and Grants.gov before you will be able to submit an application. These registrations are totally free!!
- b. If you have never applied to a federal grant before, you will need you will need to create an account using login.gov to complete your SAM.gov registration.. The process for entity registration includes obtaining a 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.

II. Finalizing registration on SAM.gov and Grants.gov can take more than a month!!

- ## III. Do not wait!! Start registration now and/or check that your registrations are active and current

Questions on...

- Purpose of the EJCPS program
- Definition of a CBO
- Funding Totals and Award Information
- Eligibility – Who can apply directly for an EJCPS award
- Partnerships (IRA and/or Traditional EJ partnerships)
- SAM.gov and Grants.gov Requirement

Topics to be covered in this section:

- Types of Eligible Projects and Project Activities
- Special Considerations
- The EJCPS Model and Elements of the Model
- Ineligible Activities

Funding Opportunity (Section I) cont.

pages 2 – 15 of the RFA

I. Types of Eligible Project Activities (not all inclusive):

- Research (incidental to an eligible project) and public education
- small-scale construction and demolition work (if needed for project)
- small-scale clean-ups
- installations of air or water filtration systems
- Disposal and energy recovery training
- building refurbishments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants
- mitigation and/or monitoring of sources of pollution of pollution
- remediation of lead or asbestos
- workforce development to support low and zero emission and resilient technologies that reduce greenhouse gas
- community revitalization planning in support of climate resiliency and adaptation
- efforts to improve equitable transportation and mobility including through efforts to address barriers of cost and safety related to walking, bicycling, and public transit in order to reduce air pollution
- development of disaster preparedness plans

Funding Opportunity (Section I) cont.

pages 2 – 15 of the RFA

I. 2023 Special Considerations and Priorities*:

1. Projects addressing Climate Change, Disaster Resiliency, and/or Emergency Preparedness

2. Rural areas

- Local areas with populations of 50,000 or less that have limited access to resources commonly found in metro areas
- Community Network areas selected by the Rural Partners Network (See [rural.gov](https://www.rural.gov) for a complete list of communities)
- Coal and Energy Communities (See [energycommunities.gov](https://www.energycommunities.gov) for a complete list of communities)
- Applicants claiming rural status must provide sufficient detail (census data, population figures, descriptions of local resources, etc.) for EPA to validate the rural status of the underserved community.

3. [Health Impact Assessments](#) (HIA)

- Projects that seek to determine the potential effects of a proposed environmental decision on the health of underserved and vulnerable communities and the distribution of those effects within the communities
- Applicants proposing HIAs will be expected to lead and coordinate the HIA along with their partners. EPA staff may provide technical advice but will not lead implementation of the project or HIA.

**The special considerations listed above will only be considered as an “other factor” during selection decisions. Applicants do not get “extra” points for addressing one or more of the special considerations*

Funding Opportunity (Section I) cont.

pages 2 – 15 of the RFA

I. Use of the EJ Collaborative Problem Solving Model must be detailed in the application

- Collaborative problem-solving is defined as an effort to bring together groups and resources (by three or more stakeholders) to solve a set of problems that any single entity cannot solve individually.

II. EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving Model Elements:

1. Issue Identification, Visioning, and Strategic Goal-Setting;
2. Community Capacity-Building and Leadership Development;
3. Development of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships and Leveraging of Resources;
4. Consensus Building and Dispute Resolution;
5. Constructive Engagement with Other Stakeholders;
6. Sound Management and Implementation; and
7. Evaluation

III. Applicants do not have to address all 7 elements in their workplan but should address at least several

Ineligible Activities (Section I)

- Lobbying as restricted in 2 CFR 200.450.
- Legal advice, services, or representation
- Travel for federal employees
- Projects or programs that are not eligible for funding under section 138(b)(2) of the Clean Air Act or the environmental justice implementation and training grant authority in EPA's Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriation Act, Public Law 117-103.
 - (e.g.) projects that are not related to the environment and/or environmental issues

Questions on...

- Types of Eligible Projects and Project Activities
- Special Considerations
- The EJCPS Model and Elements of the Model
- Ineligible Activities

Topics to be covered in this section:

- Contents of an Application Package
- Evaluation Criteria
 - Upcoming Amendment to the RFA
 - Things to consider when addressing each criteria
- Timeline

Contents of an Application Package (Section IV)

Mandatory Forms and 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 Attachment Form for the Workplan (18-page limit)

Use Other Attachments Form for the following additional mandatory documents:

- Itemized Budget Sheet (optional template in the Appendices)
- Environmental Results / Logic Model
- Letters of Commitment / Partnership Letters
- Resumes of the Project Manager (PM) and other key personnel
- **Proof of Nonprofit Status** - documentation that shows the organization is either a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; OR a non-profit organization recognized by the state, territory, commonwealth or tribe in which it is located.

Evaluation Criteria (Section V)

- **Each application passing Threshold Eligibility will be reviewed and scored by a review panel**
- **100 points maximum**
- **5 overarching Evaluation Criterion**
 - Program Objectives
 - Project Activities / Milestone Schedule / Detailed Budget Narrative
 - Environmental Results
 - Programmatic Capability
 - Past Performance

Upcoming Amendment to the RFA

- **EPA is removing Criteria 1.e.2 (3 points)**
 - Relates to the qualified environmental issue(s) identified in your Project Summary Page
- **EPA is adding these 3 points to the following criterion:**
 - Criteria 2.b (Milestone Schedule) +1 point
 - Criteria 4.c (Expenditure of Awarded Grant funds) + 2 points
- **Title of Criteria 4.c will now read as follows:**
 - Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds, and plan for compliance with EPA's [Pre-award Compliance Review for Nonprofit Organizations](#) (4 points total)

Upcoming Amendment to the RFA cont.

Criteria 4.c (new language)

Under this criterion, applicants 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. For all EJCS projects, but especially for projects greater than \$200,000, if the applicant is concerned that they may not have the adequate financial controls, systems, and procedures in place to comply with EPA's Pre-award Compliance Review for Nonprofit Organizations, the applicant should describe their **plan** for establishing the necessary controls before the time of award (currently targeted for October 1, 2023).

NOTE – For projects greater than \$200,000, applicants will need to be prepared to submit EPA's Administrative Capability Questionnaire ([EPA Form 6600-09](#)) and have compliant systems and controls in place before funds are awarded. (4 points)

Evaluation Criteria (Section V) cont.

- **1.0 Program Objectives (45 points)**
 - Project Summary Page (2 points)
 - Environmental and Public Health information of the Underserved Community (12 points)
 - Organization's Connection to the Underserved Community (9 points)
 - EJCPS Model (8 points)
 - Project Linkages (2 points)
 - Partner and Collaborate (12 points)

Things to Consider for Criteria #1

- 1.0 Program Objectives (45 points)
 - **Convey the Story of Your Community and Project**
 - **Weave data and metrics into your narrative**
 - Consider including charts, graphs, and pictures into your narrative as well
 - Consider including direct quotes from community residents and pictures from the community with captions (NOTE - be mindful of space if you do this)
 - **People (including Reviewers) relate to stories**
 - Tell the story of the community's plight with specific disproportionate environmental/public health issues
 - How will your project help the people of that community?
 - How has your previous work helped in the community?

Things to Consider for Criteria #1 cont.

- 1.0 Program Objectives (45 points)
 - **The applying CBO will be evaluated on their connection to the underserved community**
 - Partners' relationships with the community may be considered as well, but primarily this is an evaluation of the applicant's (i.e., the prime) relationship with the community
 - **Point Allocations**
 - Pay attention to how many points each criteria is worth
 - In general, spend more time/effort on the criteria that are worth more points.
 - **Be Efficient**
 - Consider utilizing a References page, citations, and footnotes to save space

Evaluation Criteria (Section V) cont.

- **2.0 Project Activities / Milestone Schedule / Budget (21 points)**
 - Project Activities (10 points)
 - Milestone Schedule (5 points)
 - Itemized Budget Sheet / Budget Narrative (6 points)
 - Attach itemized budget sheet and budget narrative using the Other Attachments form

NOTE – Budgets will be evaluated for reasonableness, allowability, and cost effectiveness

Things to Consider for Criteria #2

- 2.0 Project Activities / Milestone Schedule / Budget (21 points)
 - **Your milestone schedule should support the narrative detailing your project activities**
 - The milestone schedule summarizes and clarifies for reviewers when each task detailed will occur
 - **The budget narrative should be included in the 18-page workplan**
 - It should explain everything in the attached itemized budget sheet
 - **The itemized budget sheet should make it clear how you calculated each line item**
 - Specificity is critical when EPA looks at the budget
 - Attach the itemized budget sheet as an Other attachment

Evaluation Criteria (Section V) cont.

- **3.0 Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes & Performance Measurement Plan (16 points)**
 - Environmental Results - Outputs/Outcomes (8 points)
 - Performance Measurement Plan (4 points)
 - Sustainability Plan and Community Vision (4 points)

Things to Consider for Criteria #3

- **3.0 Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes & Performance Measurement Plan (16 points)**
 - Use Specific Metrics – When developing your Logic Model and Performance Measurement Plan, where possible always include target metrics for outputs and outcomes.
 - For example, add target estimates for the:
 - # of residents who'll attend your trainings,
 - # of water samplings you aim to take, and the
 - # of people you'll engage through outreach.
 - Your Short-Term outcomes should also include target metrics
 - Your intermediate and long-term outcome projections don't need to be specific, as those results won't be felt for years.

Evaluation Criteria (Section V) cont.

- **4.0 Programmatic Capability (12 points)**
 - Organizational Experience (4 points)
 - Staff Experience and Qualifications (4 points)
 - It is not sufficient to only submit resumes and get full points here...
 - You should expound here in your narrative and use the resumes to support what you describe
 - Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds, and plan for compliance with EPA's Pre-award Compliance Review for Nonprofit Organizations (4 points)

Evaluation Criteria (Section V) cont.

- **4.0 Programmatic Capability (12 points)**
 - Organizational Experience (4 points)
 - Staff Experience and Qualifications (4 points)
 - It is not sufficient to only submit resumes and get full points here...
 - You should expound here in your narrative and use the resumes to support what you describe
 - Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds, and **plan** for compliance with EPA's [Pre-award Compliance Review for Nonprofit Organizations](#) (4 points)
 - Selected applicants submitting for the \$500,000 track should prepare to pass the Pre-award Compliance Review for Nonprofits to receive their funds
 - See Presentation by Daryl Hobbs (Office of Grants & Debarment) in Recording of webinar #1

Evaluation Criteria (Section V) cont.

- **5.0 Past Performance (6 points)**
 - List of Past federal and/or non-federal grants (3 points)
 - Grants within last 3 years only
 - List no more than 5 agreements
 - Ideally list grants similar in size and scope to the EJCPS awards
 - DO NOT list contracts
 - Reporting History (3 points)
 - Description of your history meeting reporting requirements

Evaluation Criteria (Section V) cont.

Other Factors - In addition to the final scores and ranks, the selection official may use the factors listed below to make final selection determinations amongst high-ranking applications:

- Special Considerations (Climate Change, Rural Areas, and/or Health Impact Assessments)
- Geographic Diversity
- EPA Programmatic Priorities.
- Availability of funds

Timeline

- January 10th – RFA opened
- Early February – Amendment to the RFA targeted for release
- **April 10th – RFA closes**
- April thru August '23 – Threshold and Scoring Reviews
- September '23 – Selectees will be contacted
- October '23 – National announcement for all EJCPS awards

Questions on...

- Contents of an Application Package
- Evaluation Criteria
- Timeline

Feel free to raise virtual hand, unmute, and ask questions related to all components of the EJPCS program and the RFA...

General Question & Answer



Contact Information for EJGPS program

| | |
|--|--|
| Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights | Burney.Jacob@epa.gov , Burrell.Omari@epa.gov |
| Region 1 | Norcross.Jeffrey@epa.gov |
| Region 2 | Frazier.Tasha@epa.gov |
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