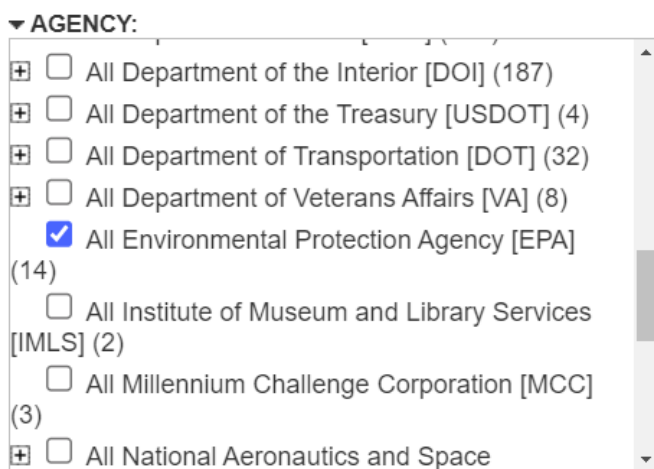# EPA Grants Competition Process Webinar, March 28, 2023
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1: Are grants available to private industry? Or only to government and related agencies?

A1: For-profit organizations are generally not eligible for EPA grant funding. Non-profits; State, tribal, and local governments; interstate agencies; and Institutions of Higher Education are among the common eligible applicant types. To determine whether your organization is eligible for a specific funding opportunity, refer to Section III of the Notice of Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. To determine whether your organization is generally eligible under a grant program, refer to the Applicant Eligibility section of the Assistance Listing on SAM.gov.

Q2: Is EPA regularly in the agency list in Grants.gov? It seems EPA is often not listed in the agency options on Grants.gov.

A2: Yes. EPA posts all competitive grant funding opportunities on Grants.gov. You can search for EPA funding opportunities on Grants.gov by clicking on the Search tab on the homepage, and then selecting "All Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]" from the drop down list under "AGENCY".

Q3: Would each person in an organization need to register in SAM.gov, or would one registration be enough for the entire organization?

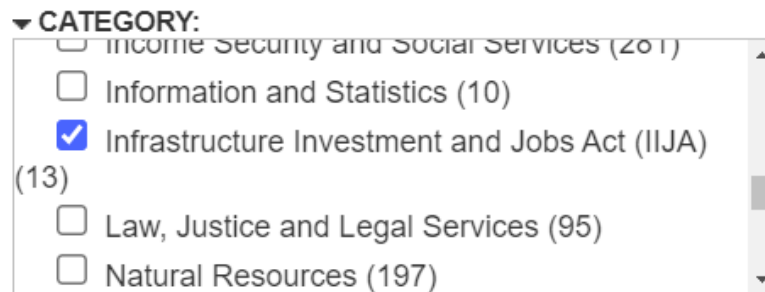A3: It's one registration per organization, not per person.

Q4: Has EPA considered extending the RFP response time? 45-60 days isn't a lot for the amount of information typically required (juggled with normal responsibilities). It's especially challenging for small/ EJ communities that haven't applied before or don't have strong EPA Region assistance.

A4: EPA is sensitive to the fact that applicants need adequate time to prepare quality applications. Please contact the Point of Contact(s) listed in Section VII of the relevant Funding Opportunity Announcement(s) to provide feedback that your organization

needs more time. If there is no open funding opportunity currently, you can reach out to the point of contact listed in the Assistance Listing on SAM.gov.

Q5:   Are there brochures/pamphlets available to distribute to tribes and other communities that have info on certain grants (BIL related) – that we can print out or send via email? These brochures would have info on the type of grant/s available and how to apply to them, etc.

A5:   There are no brochures or pamphlets available, However, information about the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/infrastructure and https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/epa-funding-announcements-bipartisan-infrastructure-law-and-inflation. Also, you can find IIJA-related funding opportunities on Grants.gov by clicking on the Search tab on the homepage, and then selecting "Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)" from the drop down list under "CATEGORY".

You can also sign up to receive email alerts when new IIJA funding opportunities are posted on Grants.gov. You can set up a Subscription here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/manage-subscriptions.html

Q6:   Will this recording be made available after the presentation?

A6:   A recording of today's webinar will be available on the Competition Process Webinar webpage at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/competition-process-webinar-march-28-2023.

Q7:   Can you provide a number to call with registration issues?

A7:   For SAM.gov registration issues, please see their Help page: https://sam.gov/content/help. Several options for help are provided, including an option to submit a ticket to get assistance.

For Grants.gov, refer to the Support tab for assistance.

EPA provides helpful tips on registering here: https://www.epa.gov/grants/how-register-apply-grants. Please note that EPA does not manage SAM.gov or Grants.gov and generally is unable to provide assistance with resolving registration issues.

Q8:   Can I download a grant request into my OneDrive?

    A8:   Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) are published in Grants.gov. You can view and download the NOFO in PDF format by clicking on the "Related Documents" tab within the Opportunity in Grants.gov.

Q9:   In an EPA EJCPS proposal, should Financial Partners be in Contractual or Other in the budget?

    A9:   Please contact the Point of Contact listed in Section VII of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Q10:   Can water systems apply directly to EPA for competition grants?

    A10:   It depends on the funding opportunity. Eligible entities are listed in Section III of Notice of Funding Opportunities. Also, you can learn about eligibility by reviewing the Applicant Eligibility section of Assistance Listings on SAM.gov.

Q11:   Do you have to reapply/renew the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) every year? One of our subawardees got one this year and said they would have to go through the process annually.

    A11:   Yes, SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Q12:   Is there a required timeline for EPA to provide the debrief after it's been requested?

    A12:   There is not a specific timeline for EPA to provide a debrief, although EPA is required to provide a debrief in a timely manner after it has been requested.

Q13:   Do you give feedback on grants not approved?

    A13:   You can request a debriefing within 15 days of being notified that you are not selected or are ineligible, and we highly encourage it. It can help you create a stronger application in the future.

Q14:   What is a solution to address letters of partnerships if they are not available before the due date?

    A14:   Contact the Point of Contact listed in Section VII of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Q15:   Will there be any EPA Education Grants this year?

    A15:   We don't have any information about this currently. You can sign up using [Grants.gov's Subscription](#) feature to receive notifications of any funding opportunities posted under the Environmental Education Grants Assistance Listing 66.951.

Q16:   If I am an EPA employee working with BIL to issue funds to tribes and other disadvantaged communities, when I registered for Grants.gov, should I be an Applicant or a Grantor?

    A16:   EPA employees do not need to register in Grants.gov.

Q17:   Don't project officers work with grant managers to review application materials? Is that only prohibited for new applicants?

    A17:   Project Officers and Grants Management Specialists review all grant applications prior to award. Competitive grant applications that are selected for funding undergo this review after the competitive grant process is complete.

Q18:   Can we apply for the same program or project under different opportunities? We struggle with wanting to include the same programs in different opportunities as we don't know what will be funded.
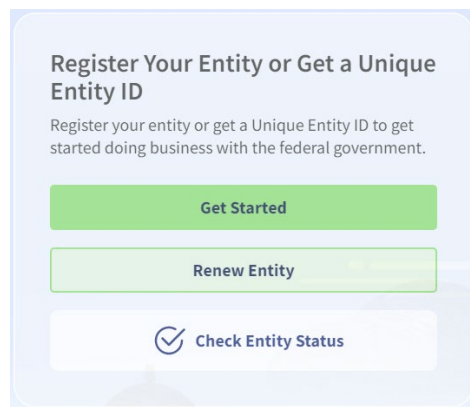
A18:   Yes, applicants may submit the same proposal under more than one NOFO. However, EPA may not make multiple awards to fund the same work in a project. If the same project is selected under more than one NOFO, you will have to work with EPA to determine which program to fund the project under. Also, each NOFO has unique requirements, and the same project may not be eligible or competitive under multiple NOFOs.

Q19:   Can you repeat what site the grants are listed on?

A19:   Grant opportunities can be found on Grants.gov.

Q20:   Do you renew the UEI through SAM.gov?

A20:   Yes. Go to SAM.gov and click "Renew Entity".

Q21:   Is the staff listed available for questions on 2 CFR Part 200 (EPA interpretation)?

A21:   If you are preparing a competitive grant application and you have questions about the regulations, you should contact the Point of Contact in Section VII of the NOFO. If your application has already been selected for funding, or it is a noncompetitive grant application, you should reach out to the EPA Project Officer and Grants Specialist assigned to your application.

Q22:   Are you always notified if you are not approved for a grant? Who does this come from?

A22:   Yes. You will be notified within 15 days of the determination. The notification will likely come from the Point of Contact listed in Section VII of the NOFO. If you have questions about the notification process under a particular funding opportunity, contact the Point of Contact in Section VII.

Q23:   We are a for-profit company. Our technology is being developed by a 501(c)(3). Should the 501(c)(3) register with SAM.gov?

A23:   This would depend upon which entity is the primary applicant (and therefore fiscal agent) for the funding opportunity. Check the FAQs section on SAM.gov for guidance.

Q24:   Could you talk a bit more about the review/scoring process? Who is typically involved? Are scores "normalized" if applications are reviewed by different individuals?

   A24:   The evaluation process can vary from program to program. NOFOs will describe the evaluation process in Section V. Typically, EPA staff review applications, but it's not uncommon for program offices to use reviewers external to EPA as well. This is typically specified in Section V of the NOFO. Scores from review panels are typically averaged; however, it depends on the program.

Q25:   Are all EPA grants on Grants.gov?

   A25:   All EPA grant funding opportunities are posted on Grants.gov.

Q26:   How long does it take to receive funding after the award is approved?

   A26:   Generally, it will take from a few weeks to several months from when a funding award is approved to when funding is able to be drawn down on the grant.

Q27:   Are the EPA Regions required to follow the same feedback responses to applicants as the Washington Office? Especially, if the applicant is not successful after peer review?

   A27:   All EPA program offices follow the same debriefing and dispute procedures, which can be found here: https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-competition-dispute-resolution-procedures.

Q28:   Please repeat the abbreviation re. BIL vs IRA?

   A28:   The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is also often referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). IRA is an abbreviation for the Inflation Reduction Act.

Q29:   Do we have to have audited financials in order to receive a grant?

   A29:   No. An applicant does not have to have audited financial statements prior to receiving a grant award. However, recipients who are interested in being reimbursed for indirect costs must submit an indirect cost (IDC) proposal to a Federal cognizant agency for review and approval. IDC proposals should be based on audited financial statements. Similarly, recipients who expend more than $750,000 in federal grant funds in a given fiscal year are required to undergo a single audit performed by an independent auditor.

Q30:   In the eligibility categories, what institution categories would state and public universities fall under?

   A30:   State and public universities can potentially fit into two categories. First, they are all institutions of higher education (IHE). Second, some State and public universities may qualify as an eligible entity as a State for certain programs. State is often defined in our grant programs using the definition in 2 CFR 200.1. That definition includes instrumentalities of the State as part of the State government for eligibility purposes. In some cases, State or public universities are able to show that they are instrumentalities of the State under State law. In those cases the university is eligible as a State. Note that (1) not all State or public universities are able to demonstrate that they are instrumentalities of a State under State law and those universities are not eligible as part of a State; and (2) there are instances in which an authorizing statute uses a different definition of State and may not allow for a state university to be included.

Q31:   Could you please repeat how to identify what is BIL vs IRA via the Opportunity number ID?

       A31:   Opportunities with Funding Opportunity Numbers beginning with "EPA-I-" include IIJA/BIL funding, and Funding Opportunity Numbers beginning with "EPA-R-" include IRA funding.

Q32:   Are opportunity numbers that start with EPA-I-XXX the ones related to BIL?

       A32:   Yes.

Q33:   Do you anticipate future funding will support capacity building for the organizations that are performing work within harder-to-reach communities?

       A33:   Yes.

Q34:   How do we know or find out if grants will be offered in the next FY? For example, SWIFR RFA ends 4/14/23, would it open again in 2024?

       A34:   The competitive grant cycle varies by program. You can reach out to the point of contact for that program to see if there is any public information available about future competitions.

Q35:   Is EPA-R-XXX for IRA funded grant programs?

       A35:   Yes. EPA identifies competitive funding opportunities that include Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding with "EPA-R-" at the beginning of the Funding Opportunity Number. Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunities are identified with "IRA-I-".

Q36:   Is it possible to have a multi-year cooperative agreement where funding is added each year? The work plan process is often time-consuming and we don't always get our Competitive Agreement (CA) until right before the project period starts which makes it hard to hit the ground running since we can't issue any subawards/ contracts until we have the CA in place (the subawards/ contracts would start when the new funding starts).

       A36:   It depends on the program whether annually funded, multi-year projects are an option. If you are negotiating a noncompetitive award, you should work with your EPA Project Officer and Grants Specialist to determine what options are available. Competitive grants must follow the terms indicated in the NOFO. If there is a competitive program not offering this in their NOFO, you can reach out to the Point of Contact for that program and provide feedback.