

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)
TITLE: Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings
ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-OAR-ORIA-23-04
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 66.044

IMPORTANT DATES

Wednesday, March 22	Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Opens
Monday, April 10	Information Session
Friday, April 21	Optional Intent to Apply
Thursday, April 27	Final Date to Submit Questions
Tuesday, May 9	NOFO Closes – Application Deadline
Monday, July 10	Anticipated Notification of Selection
Friday, September 8	Anticipated Awards

Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) no later than **Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)** in order to be considered for funding.

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](#).

NOTE: If you intend to name a contractor (including an individual consultant or equipment vendor) or a subrecipient as a project partner or otherwise in your application, EPA recommends that you carefully review, and comply with, the directions contained in the “Contracts and Subawards” clause that can be accessed under the Section I.E clause for “Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into the Solicitation.” Refer to [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements and EPA’s Subaward Policy](#) and supplemental Frequent Questions for additional guidance. Applicants must demonstrate that named contractors (including individual consultants or equipment vendors) were selected in compliance with the competitive requirements of the Procurement Standards in 2 CFR Part 200 as interpreted in EPA guidance and/or that named subrecipients meet the eligibility requirements in EPA’s Subaward Policy for EPA to consider their qualifications and role in the proposed project.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background and Summary

This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible entities to improve public health protection against smoke from wildfires by enhancing preparedness in community buildings. EPA is soliciting applications for projects that support this effort through activities such as:

- smoke readiness planning,
- outreach and training for smoke readiness,
- indoor and outdoor air quality monitoring,
- deployment of portable air cleaners,
- identification and preparation of cleaner air shelters, and
- significant improvements to buildings such as upgrading and repairing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units or systems and weatherization.

Applications must target public buildings or buildings that serve the public. The degree to which projects demonstrate benefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations will be considered in the award of grants from this funding opportunity. In addition, applicants are encouraged to describe how the proposed project addresses multiple hazards that may be concurrent with wildfire smoke (e.g., extreme heat, power outages, airborne infectious disease outbreaks such as COVID-19), and how the project improves overall capacity to comprehensively address indoor air quality issues.

The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$10,670,000. Funded projects will have up to a 3-year project period. Individual awards are expected to range from \$100,000 to \$2,000,000 total. EPA anticipates awarding approximately 13-18 cooperative agreements from this announcement, subject to availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. Eligible entities cannot submit more than 1 application.

Wildfire smoke is a significant public health problem, especially as climate change accelerates and intensifies fires. Over the past 20 years, the number of acres burned annually due to wildfires in the U.S. has doubled; in 2021, nearly 60,000 fires burned over 7 million acres. Smoke plumes can have impacts over large populations, and the health impacts of wildfire smoke are significant. Smoke from wildfires can impact communities in the immediate vicinity of the fires as well as areas hundreds or thousands of miles away. Many communities in the U.S. experience smoke from wildfires for days, weeks, or even months in a given year and over multiple fire seasons. The number of individuals adversely impacted by wildfire smoke events is also expected to grow as the wildland urban interface (WUI) expands and the number of at-risk populations (e.g., individuals with pre-existing heart and lung disease, older adults, children) increases.

Wildfire smoke is a complex mixture of gases and particulate matter (PM). It has been associated with health effects ranging from eye and throat irritation to asthma attacks, cardiovascular

events, and even premature death. Certain populations may experience more severe effects due to existing health conditions and other social and demographic characteristics, although most healthy adults and children may recover quickly from wildfire smoke exposure. In addition to overt health effects, wildfire events can also cause psychological stress and mental health concerns arising from threats to life, safety, property, and loss of routines.

In response to the growing public health threat from wildfires, various guidance and tools have been developed or augmented to support the public and the public health community on protective actions. Examples include [Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials and related factsheets](#), [the Smoke-Ready Toolbox for Wildfires](#), and the [AirNow Wildfires](#) website and [Fire and Smoke Map](#). In addition to staying indoors, other commonly recommended measures include limiting smoke infiltration from outdoors, cleaning the indoor air, reducing other sources of indoor air pollution, and using personal protective equipment for those who must go outside during smoke episodes. More information about these measures is available on the EPA [Wildfires and Indoor Air Quality](#) website.

Smoke readiness planning is an approach that integrates the various measures to reduce smoke exposure under a comprehensive preparedness plan. Smoke readiness plans can be prepared for whole communities, or at the individual building level. At the community level, they coordinate action around indoor and outdoor air quality using evidence-based strategies to guide responses to wildfire smoke events. At the building level, these plans outline specific actions to be taken in the event of wildfire smoke and assign roles and responsibilities to ensure those actions are completed. For more information about building-specific smoke readiness plans, see the EPA [Wildfires and Indoor Air Quality in Schools and Commercial Buildings](#) website.

During smoke episodes, smoke can enter buildings and adversely impact indoor air quality. Indoor environments are affected by various types of pollutants, and often experience different rates of infiltration of smoke. Consequently, staying indoors does not reduce exposure to smoke or other air pollutants to the same extent in all buildings. For example, buildings with central air conditioning generally recirculate indoor air, resulting in lower concentrations of air pollutants from the outdoors compared to buildings that use open windows for cooling. On average, older buildings also tend to allow more smoke infiltration than newer buildings. It is also important to note that levels of certain indoor air pollutants can sometimes reach two to five times the level of outdoor pollutants. Effective indoor air quality management includes both control of indoor air pollutants and the introduction and distribution of adequate outdoor air.

Central HVAC systems in many types of buildings contain filters that can remove PM with varying degrees of efficiency and can be used to mitigate smoke exposure. Higher-efficiency filters generally result in greater PM reductions, however building- and system-specific factors play an important role in filter effectiveness. Building tightness, HVAC flow rate and runtime, filter fit, and operation and maintenance all affect how well filters remove PM.

Portable air cleaners properly matched to the size of the indoor space can also help reduce indoor PM during wildfire smoke episodes. They can be helpful in indoor spaces that are not served by central HVAC systems if windows and doors remain closed and excessive heat is not a concern.

Air cleaners can also be used in combination with central air system filter upgrades to maximize the reduction of indoor particles. Commercial portable air cleaners are often unavailable during major smoke events (for example, due to limited supply) and can be unaffordable for some populations. In these situations, do-it-yourself (DIY) air cleaners, made by attaching a furnace filter to a box fan, may be a temporary alternative to commercial air cleaners. More information on in-home air filtration is provided on the EPA [Air Cleaners and Air Filters in the Home](#) website. Find more information about DIY air cleaners on the EPA [Wildfires and Indoor Air Quality](#) website.

Public cleaner air spaces and shelters are examples of exposure mitigation approaches that can be implemented at the community level. These community cleaner air spaces and shelters may be in commercial or community buildings with upgraded air filtration systems where groups of people can gather for temporary relief from high smoke concentrations. Factors affecting the effectiveness of these spaces and shelters include the air tightness of the building, effectiveness of the existing HVAC system (including providing adequate ventilation for the increased occupancy and the ability to adjust settings for smoke events), feasibility of installing higher efficiency filters, and potential ways to limit smoke infiltration. See the EPA website [Wildfires and Indoor Air Quality in Schools and Commercial Buildings](#) for more information.

Health risk communication about wildfire smoke is central to a comprehensive risk reduction strategy and is an important aspect of a public health response to smoke in communities, states, and regions that frequently experience significant wildfire smoke intrusion. Critical components of a public health risk communication campaign about smoke are messages that include accurate, actionable information to affected individuals when and where it is most useful, and motivate recipients to take recommended actions, e.g., stay indoors or use filtration devices.

Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings is a new federal grant program to support enhancing community wildland fire smoke preparedness. This program will provide grants to States, federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies, and non-profit organizations for the assessment, prevention, control, or abatement of wildfire smoke hazards in community buildings and related activities. These grants are intended to support activities that will reduce indoor exposure to pollutants in wildfire smoke and, in turn, reduce the public health burden of wildfire smoke exposure.

B. Program Goals and Objectives

EPA is requesting applications from eligible entities (as described in Section III.A) to conduct demonstrations, technical assistance, training, education and/or outreach projects that seek to improve public health protection against smoke from wildfires by enhancing preparedness in community buildings. EPA is requesting applications for the assessment, prevention, control, or abatement of wildfire smoke hazards and related activities that target public buildings and/or buildings that serve the public, but privately owned or operated.

Activities will improve the capability and capacity of communities and buildings to effectively reduce indoor concentrations of air pollutants in wildfire smoke, especially PM. This may

include improvements to building structures, and increasing the capacity of building owners, operators, service providers, occupants, and others to effectively manage buildings during wildfire smoke events. Specific activities may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Smoke Readiness Planning to develop specific plans, procedures, and decision-making frameworks at the building or community level to be implemented before and during wildfire smoke events.
- Outreach activities such as translation and culturally appropriate adaptation of wildfire smoke preparedness materials, or targeted outreach to members of the public through community organizations and institutions.
- Technical training on the effectiveness and implementation of ventilation and filtration strategies for wildfire smoke mitigation in different types of buildings with various HVAC systems.
- Deployment of portable air cleaners or DIY air cleaners for use in community buildings.
- Indoor and outdoor air quality monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of wildfire smoke mitigation activities.
- Identification and initial preparation of community cleaner air spaces or cleaner air shelters.
- Significant improvements to buildings such as upgrades and repairs to HVAC units or systems and weatherization. Such activities should include training and planning elements to ensure that improvements are properly maintained and operated.

Applicants are encouraged to integrate project activities under a comprehensive smoke management plan at the building or community level, where appropriate.

All applications should:

- Characterize the population served by the project, such as the estimated number of people served, and the location and type of community (e.g., urban, rural, etc.). Maps, data, analyses, and results characterizing the population served by the project may be included as an optional attachment.
- Describe how much or how often the buildings or communities served by the project are impacted by wildfire smoke (e.g., number of days the community was impacted by smoke; number of school closures due to smoke; number of smoke-related air quality alerts issued; etc. over a recent timeframe, such as each of the past 3 years).
- Describe a detailed approach to measure project effectiveness (e.g., evaluation of knowledge or skills gained from outreach and training activities, collection of air quality monitoring data to demonstrate lower indoor PM concentrations as a result of changes to the operation or maintenance of a building).

Applicants may find the following resources helpful for describing wildfire smoke impacts, and are not limited to these data sources:

- *For demonstrating wildfire smoke impacts:*
 - US Forest Service PM_{2.5} Monitoring – Historical Data: <https://tools.airfire.org/historical/>
 - US Forest Service Wildfire Risk to Communities – Explore Risk: <https://wildfirerisk.org/explore>
 - National Interagency Fire Center National Significant Wildland Fire Potential

- Outlooks: <https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/outlooks.htm>
- AirNow Fire and Smoke Map: <https://fire.airnow.gov/>
 - AirNow Past Data: <https://gispub.epa.gov/airnow/index.html?tab=3>
 - Census OnTheMap for Emergency Management Tool: <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/em/>
 - State Smoke Blogs:
 - California: <http://californiasmokeinfo.blogspot.com/>
 - Idaho: <http://idsmoke.blogspot.com/>
 - Oregon: <https://www.oregonsmoke.org/>
 - Washington: <https://wasmoke.blogspot.com/>

Applicants are encouraged to describe how the project addresses multiple hazards that may be concurrent with wildfire smoke (such as extreme heat, power outages, and airborne infectious disease outbreaks such as COVID-19) and how the project improves overall capacity to comprehensively address indoor air quality issues.

Applicants are also encouraged to discuss how they will promote and continue or replicate efforts after the project has ended.

Note that if selected, applications that propose activities involving the collection of environmental data, such as air quality data, will be required to develop and submit for EPA approval a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) that identifies and documents the activities that will ensure that the data is of adequate quality to be used as planned.

EPA will not consider applications that do not demonstrate how much or how often the buildings or communities served by the project are impacted by wildfire smoke.

EPA will not consider any applications that are exclusively designed to conduct scientific research. Applications may include research components such as building blocks to demonstration, training, education and/or outreach projects. In such cases, proposals should clearly articulate this link, explain why the research is necessary for the project's success, and ensure that such research does not already exist.

EPA will not consider activities that make permanent improvements, such as the installation of HVAC equipment, in private residences. Note that activities that utilize temporary improvements, such as the distribution of portable air cleaners to private residences, are eligible activities.

EPA will not consider activities that promote the use of air cleaning technologies of unknown or unclear performance against air pollutants in wildfire smoke such as bipolar ionization, ozone generators, ionizing air cleaners, and oxidizing air cleaners. Note that activities related to DIY air cleaners are eligible.

Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities:

Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected. EPA will evaluate environmental justice issues under criterion 4 of Section V.A. of this NOFO.

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, a community is defined as “either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a geographically dispersed set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions. In addition, for disadvantaged communities that are geographically defined, “disadvantaged communities” means a geographic area meets the following criteria:

- Any census tract that is included as disadvantaged in [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST)

The CEJST displays lands within the boundaries of Federally Recognized Tribes on the map in order to designate those areas as disadvantaged communities. However, regardless of whether a Federally Recognized Tribe has land, all Federally Recognized Tribal entities are considered disadvantaged communities for the purposes of the Justice40 Initiative.

Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which applicants demonstrate **how** the project will effectively address the disproportionate and adverse effects or impacts (e.g., human health, environmental, and/or climate-harms and risks) that have affected and/or currently affect disadvantaged communities.

Adverse effects may be the result of industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions and include the accompanying economic challenges of such effects.

In addressing these criteria, as applicable, applicants should describe how the project benefits these affected communities and/or populations including those that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the adverse impacts described above. Additionally, applicants should describe the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these affected communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project.

Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal and indigenous

populations, and vulnerable populations including those identified above. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions.

Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include:

- Differential proximity and exposure to environmental hazards;
- Greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to genetic predisposition, age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or poor nutrition);
- Unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (e.g., subsistence fishing or farming);
- Cumulative effects from multiple stressors;
- Reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes due to language barriers, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources; and
- Degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.

Data, analyses, and results from CEJST may be included as an optional attachment, which will not count towards the project narrative xx-page limit; see Section IV.C. for more information. Additional details on the contents of applications, including specifics on what should be included in the project narrative, are included in Section IV.B.

C. Environmental Results and Strategic Plan Information

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

- 1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan:** The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 4, “Ensure Clean and Healthy Air for All Communities;” Objective 4.2, “Reduce Exposure to Radiation and Improve Indoor Air.” Under this objective, “Limit unnecessary radiation exposure and achieve healthier indoor air quality, especially for vulnerable populations.” All applications must be for projects that support the goal and objective above. For more information see: [FY 2022 - FY 2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#).

EPA also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see [EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements](#)). Applicants must 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 priorities described above.

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

Expected outputs from the projects to be funded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Number of communities with an established Smoke Readiness Plan;
- Number of wildfire smoke preparedness materials translated or culturally adapted;
- Number of building owners, managers, or technicians trained;
- Number of technical training events conducted;
- Number of buildings that received portable air cleaners and the number they received;
- Number of buildings served by an indoor and outdoor air monitoring network; and/or
- Number of community cleaner air spaces available for wildfire smoke events.
- Number of buildings upgraded or repaired to improve wildfire smoke mitigation.

Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs, as specified in Section VI.B. “Reporting Requirement,” of this NOFO.

- 3. Outcomes:** The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature, but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected outcomes from the projects to be funded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Expansion in communities and/or community buildings adopting Smoke Readiness Plans;
- Increase in awareness, capacity, and action to reduce building occupants’ exposure to wildfire smoke within highly impacted communities;
- Increase in community buildings that effectively reduce occupants’ exposure to wildfire smoke;
- Increase in population served by community buildings that effectively reduce occupants’ exposure to wildfire smoke; and/or
- Increase in availability of air monitoring data to inform wildfire smoke management activities.

- 4. Performance Measures.** The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful processes and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. Additional details on reporting

requirements are included in Section VI.B. It is expected that the description of performance measures will directly relate to the project outcomes and outputs. The description of the performance measures will directly relate to the project's outcomes and outputs, including but not limited to:

- Overseeing subrecipients, and/or contractors and vendors;
- Tracking and reporting project progress on expenditures and purchases; and
- Tracking, measuring, and reporting accomplishments and proposed timelines/milestones.

The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the project will achieve?
- How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

D. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for this action is the Clean Air Act, §103(b)(3), as supplemented by authority provided in the 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 117-103, 136 Stat. 49) and the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 117-328), which authorizes the award of grants for research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, and studies related to the causes, effects, (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, and control of air pollution. This solicitation is related to EPA's statutory authority by supporting programs that equip eligible entities to take action to reduce potential risks from indoor pollutants introduced by wildfire smoke. These programs may also inform future programs with similar goals.

EPA will not consider any applications that are exclusively designed to conduct scientific research. Applications may include research components such as building blocks for demonstration, training, education and/or outreach projects. In such cases, proposals should clearly articulate this link, explain why the research is necessary for the project's success, and ensure that such research does not already exist.

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. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

A. Amount of Funding Available

The total estimated funding available for awards under this competitive opportunity is approximately \$10,670,000. Funding is dependent upon funding availability, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.

The amount of federal funding requested by an applicant must not exceed \$2,000,000.

A maximum of \$2,667,500 (25%) of total funding available may go to award recipients in any one State.

Based on the broad spectrum of projects that may be proposed, the estimated amount of funding available to address the priority areas described in Section I.B is anticipated to be divided as follows and is subject to change. This information is being provided for informational purposes only.

- 30% of available funds for smaller awards – awards ranging from \$100,000 up to \$350,000
- 70% of available funds for larger awards – awards ranging from \$350,000 up to \$2,000,000

B. Number and Amount of Awards

EPA anticipates awarding a total of approximately 13 to 18 cooperative agreements under this announcement, subject to the availability of funds, the quantity and quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. Awards are expected to be between \$100,000 and \$2,000,000.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and other applicable considerations, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of the original selections.

In addition, EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this announcement or to make fewer awards than anticipated.

C. Partial Funding

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, thereby maintaining the integrity of the competition and selection process.

D. Additional Awards

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

E. Award Funding and Incremental/Full Funding

Awards may be fully or incrementally funded, as appropriate, based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

F. Period of Performance

The estimated period of performance for awards resulting from this solicitation will be up to 3 years. The estimated project start date for awards will begin by October 1, 2023.

G. Funding Type

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. The anticipated substantial federal involvement for cooperative agreements under the Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings grant program may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR §200.317 and 2 CFR §200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements, reviewing qualifications of key personnel, and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. 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 Entities

In accordance with Assistance Listing No. 66.044 and EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance [Agreements \(EPA Order § 5700.5A1\)](#), competition under this solicitation is available to states (including the District of Columbia, U.S. territories and possessions); federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(30)), and public and private non-profit organizations.

Consistent with 20 U.S.C. § 7801(30), the term “local educational agency” means a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or of or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools. Consistent with the definition of local government at 2 CFR § 200.1, the term public pre-school means any pre-kindergarten program that is funded by any unit of government within a state, including a school district.

Consistent with the definition of Nonprofit organization at 2 CFR § 200.1, the term nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Non-profit institutions of higher education are eligible to apply. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR § 200.1 are eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible. Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status; such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. § 1611.

For-profit organizations are not an eligible entity for this funding opportunity.

B. Required Cost Sharing

There is a 10% cost share requirement for awards under this announcement. Cost sharing may be waived for facilities located in economically distressed communities.

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, an “economically distressed community” means a census tract above the 70th percentile (national percentiles, i.e. compared to US) for low income, unemployment rate, or less than high school education using EJSCREEN.

In order to waive the cost-sharing requirement, applications that propose projects that target specific facility(s) must provide EJSCREEN data for the census tract in which each facility is located. Applications may also include data for nearby census tract(s) which are served by the target facility(s) and explain how the additional census tracts are served by the facility(s) (e.g., school boundary encompasses multiple census tracts). At least one census tract served by the facility must meet the definition of an economically distressed community above to waive the cost-sharing requirement.

In order to waive the cost-sharing requirement for proposed projects that do not target specific facilities, such as outreach and training projects, applications must demonstrate that the proposed target population belongs to or is expected to serve an economically disadvantaged community. Applications must provide EJSCREEN data for the census tract(s) expected to be targeted by the project and may include an explanation of how the project will benefit census tract(s) that meet the definition of an economically distressed community above to waive the cost-sharing requirement. If the project serves multiple census tracts, more than half of the census tracts served must meet the definition of an economically distressed community above to waive the cost-sharing requirement.

C. Threshold 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. If necessary, EPA may contact applicants to clarify threshold eligibility questions prior to making an eligibility determination. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration due to the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Application Content and Submission

- a.** Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.B. with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the 10-page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.
- b.** In addition, applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV.A. 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.A. of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV.A. of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely and properly submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV.A, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.
- c.** Applications submitted after the submission deadline or outside of grants.gov 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](https://www.grants.gov) or [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov). An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. See Section IV of this solicitation for instructions to submit through Grants.gov.

2. Applications must support Goal 4“Ensure Clean and Healthy Air for All Communities”; Objective 4.2: “Reduce Exposure to Radiation and Improve Indoor Air” of EPA’s Strategic Plan described in Section I.C.
3. Applications which request EPA assistance funds in excess of \$2,000,000, as specified in Section II.A of this NOFO, are not eligible and will not be reviewed.

D. Partially Ineligible Activities

Any of the following may lead to a portion or all of the application not being reviewed:

1. **Ineligible Costs or Activities.** If an application is submitted that has ineligible items, tasks, or activities, that portion of the application will not be reviewed and will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding. Activities must meet the following requirements from Section I.B. to be eligible for funding:
 - a. EPA will not consider any applications that are exclusively designed to conduct scientific research. Applications may include research components such as building blocks for demonstration, training, education and/or outreach projects. In such cases, proposals should clearly articulate this link, explain why the research is necessary for the project’s success, and ensure that such research does not already exist.
 - b. EPA will not consider activities that make permanent improvements, such as the installation of HVAC equipment, in private residences.
 - c. EPA will not consider activities that promote the use of air cleaning technologies of unknown or unclear performance against air pollutants in wildfire smoke such as bipolar ionization, ozone generators, ionizing air cleaners, and oxidizing air cleaners.
 - d. If an application requests a waiver of the required cost share but does not meet the eligibility criteria as described in Section III.B., EPA may contact the applicant to either revise the application to provide the required cost share or withdraw the application.
 - e. Applications cannot include any costs that are included as a cost of any other federally financed grant, as required under 2 CFR § 200.403(f). If these costs are included in an application, the activities associated with these costs will not be reviewed or selected for funding.
2. **Other Considerations:**
 - a. Applicants can submit no more than the total number of applications (1) listed in Section I.A. If an applicant submits more applications than what is listed, EPA will contact the applicant to determine which application(s) to withdraw.

- b. EPA will not consider applications that do not describe how much or how often the buildings or communities served by the project are impacted by wildfire smoke.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

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 2. *Technical Issues with Submission* below.

1. Submission Instructions

a. SAM.gov (System for Award Management) Registration Instructions

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using [login.gov](#)¹ to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

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

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

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

¹ 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>.

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.

b. 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 calling 606-545-5035. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

c. Application Submission Process

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

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

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.

d. 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 **Tuesday, May 9, 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.

2. 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:

- a. Contact Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
- b. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- c. Send an email with Wildfire Preparedness in Community Buildings in the subject line to IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov the application deadline time and date and **must** include the following:
 - i. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
 - ii. Description of the issue
 - iii. 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](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit prior to the application submission deadline date because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is **not** an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov.

3. Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement, as described in Section IV.A.4.

Mandatory Documents:

- Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*. Please note that the organizational Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) must be included on the SF-424.
- Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
- EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report*
- EPA Form 5700-54, *Key Contacts Form*
- Project Narrative Attachment Form, *Project Narrative* (See Section IV.B for additional information)
- Use Other Attachments Form for the following documents:

Optional Attachment Documents: Use the “*Other Attachments*” form identified under the Mandatory Documents tab to submit the following:

- Project Team Biographies
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, note that this will be required if application is selected for funding
- Partnership Letter(s)
- Maps, data, analyses, and results characterizing the population served by the proposed project
- Maps, data, analyses, and results describing wildfire smoke impacts in the proposed project area
- Data, analyses, and results from EJSCREEN (or other EJ-focused geospatial mapping tools)
- [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST) or EPA’s [EJSCREEN](#) results

When saving application files, please ensure that the following characters are **not** included in the file names: ~ “ # % & * : < > ? / \ { | } . Including these characters can cause problems with application files.

Applications submitted through [Grants.gov](#) will be time and date stamped electronically. If you wish to confirm receipt of your application from EPA (not from [Grants.gov](#)), please contact the Agency contact in Section VII within 30 days of the close of this solicitation.

Your organization’s authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](#) no later than **Tuesday, May 9, 2023, 11:59 PM ET**.

B. Project Narrative Instructions, Format, and Content

Instructions: The project narrative should substantially comply with the instructions, format, and content described below. It should also address the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. The project narrative, including the cover page, workplan, and budget table and detail, must not exceed a maximum of 10 single-spaced typewritten pages. Pages in excess of the 10-

page limit will not be reviewed.

Supporting materials, such as project team biographies, partnership letters, EJSCREEN reports, CEJEST reports, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreements can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 10-page limit. Supporting materials should also be submitted using the Optional Attachments form.

Applicants should ensure that their project narratives are written clearly using understandable terms. Doing so will help ensure that the evaluation team members understand the purpose, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Applicants are not required, but are highly encouraged, to use the project narrative, including cover page, format below.

I. Cover Page:

The cover page should not exceed one page. The cover page should include the following information:

- **Project Title** – one descriptive sentence only
- **Project Location:** List the primary location(s) where the benefits of the project will be realized.
- **Applicant Information**
 - Applicant organization
 - Address
 - Primary contact name, phone number, and e-mail address
 - UEI number
- **Budget Summary:** Include the following table:

EPA Funding Requested	Required Cost Share, if applicable	Total Project Cost
TBD	TBD	TBD

As noted in Section II.A. of the NOFO, while each application can request funding up to \$2,000,000, the total amount of requested funding needs to be commensurate with the applicant’s proposed activities.

- **Project Period:** Provide beginning and ending dates.
- **Short Project Description:** Briefly describe your project in one to three sentences only, especially noting the expected outputs and outcomes.

II. Workplan:

Applicants must ensure that the workplan addresses the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. Applicants should use the section and subsection numbers and headings below which correspond with the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. The workplan should be written clearly using understandable terms.

Section 1- Project Summary and Approach (45 total possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

This section should contain a detailed project description of the following information:

a. Overall Project (25 possible points)

Provide a detailed project summary and description of the proposed activities to be undertaken, consistent with Section I.B. (Program Goals and Objectives) of the NOFO. Include details of every activity for which the applicant is seeking funding. This section should include details about how the activities will meet the goal of the program and describe a detailed approach to measure project effectiveness (e.g., evaluation of knowledge or skills gained from outreach and training activities, collection of air quality monitoring data to demonstrate lower indoor PM concentrations as a result of changes to the operation or maintenance of a building).

Applications should only include information in Section 1.a. of their workplan that will not be covered by another section of their workplan.

b. Wildfire Smoke Impacts (10 points)

Describe how much or how often the buildings or communities served by the proposed project are impacted by wildfire smoke.

c. Characterization of Population Served (5 points)

Characterize the population served by the proposed project, such as an estimate of the number of people served, and the location and type of community (e.g., urban, rural, etc.).

d. Multi-hazard Approach (5 points)

Describe how the proposed project addresses multiple hazards that may be concurrent with wildfire smoke (such as extreme heat, power outages, and airborne infectious disease outbreaks) and how the project improves overall capacity to comprehensively address indoor air quality issues.

Section 2 - Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures (15 total possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

a. Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes (5 possible points)

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the project as defined in Section I.C. of the NOFO. Specific outputs and outcomes should be provided and may include short- and longer-term activities. In addition to a narrative discussion of the outputs and outcomes, the applicant is encouraged to include a table such as the following:

Example of Outputs and Outcome Table

<i>Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes</i>	
<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
<i>Smoke Readiness Planning to develop specific plans, procedures, and decision-</i>	<i>Expansion in communities and/or community buildings adopting Smoke</i>

<i>making frameworks at the building or community level to be implemented during wildfire smoke events.</i>	<i>Readiness Plans.</i>
<i>Outreach activities such as translation and culturally appropriate adaptation of wildfire smoke preparedness materials, or targeted outreach to members of the public through community organizations and institutions.</i>	<i>Increase in awareness, capacity, and action to reduce building occupants' exposure to wildfire smoke within highly impacted communities.</i>
<i>Technical training on the effectiveness and implementation of ventilation and filtration strategies for wildfire smoke mitigation in different types of buildings with various HVAC systems.</i>	<i>Increase in community buildings that effectively reduce occupants' exposure to wildfire smoke.</i>
<i>Deployment of portable air cleaners or DIY air cleaners for use in community buildings.</i>	<i>Increase in population served by community buildings that effectively reduce occupants' exposure to wildfire smoke.</i>
<i>Indoor and outdoor air quality monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of wildfire smoke mitigation activities.</i>	<i>Increase in availability of air monitoring data to inform wildfire smoke management activities.</i>
<i>Identification and initial preparation of community cleaner air spaces or cleaner air shelters.</i>	<i>Increase in community buildings that effectively reduce occupants' exposure to wildfire smoke.</i>
<i>Number of buildings upgraded or repaired to improve wildfire smoke mitigation.</i>	

b. Performance Measures and Plan (5 possible points)

Applicants should describe the proposed performance measures, which will be the mechanism to track, measure, and report progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Applicants should describe their plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated, as described in Section I.C.

c. Timeline and Milestones (5 possible points)

The applicant should include a detailed timeline for the project including milestones for specific tasks, such as bidding, procurement, installation, and reports, along with estimated dates. Applicant should include scheduled time for quarterly and final report preparation into the project timeline.

Section 3- Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (15 total possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

a. Past Performance (5 possible points)

Submit a list of up to three federally- and non-federally funded assistance agreements that the applicant is performing or has performed within the last three years. Assistance agreements include federal and non-federal grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts. EPA assistance agreements are preferred. These assistance agreements should be awards directly to the applicant. For each of the agreements, include:

- Project title
- Assistance agreement number
- Federal or non-federal funding agency and, for federal agreements, assistance listing number (formally known as the CFDA number)
- Brief description of the agreement – no more than two sentences

Include a discussion of whether, and if so how, the applicant was able to successfully complete and manage the listed agreements.

b. Reporting Requirements (5 possible points)

For each of the assistance agreements listed, the applicant should describe their history of meeting the reporting requirements under the agreement(s). This should include:

- Whether the applicant submitted acceptable final reports under those agreements;
- The extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on its progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements; and
- If progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not.

Note: In evaluating applicants under the past performance factors in Section V.A. and B. of the NOFO, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these factors, which is half of the total points available for these sub-criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, a score of 0 for these factors may be received.

c. Staff Expertise (5 possible points)

Include information on the applicant's organization, including a description of the staff's knowledge, expertise, qualifications, and resources and/or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the proposed project's goals. Biographical sketches, including resumes or curriculum vitae for key staff, managers and any other key personnel can be included as an optional project team biography attachment, as listed in Section IV.A. of the NOFO; the optional attachment does not count towards the 10-page limit of the project narrative.

Section 4: Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities (10 total possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

a. Environmental Justice Issues and Environmental Health Disparities (5 possible points)

This section of the workplan should include a detailed discussion of how the proposed project will promote environmental justice, as described in Section I.B. of the NOFO. Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies. Priority for funding is given to projects which promote environmental justice.

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, a community is defined as “either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a geographically dispersed set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions. In addition, for disadvantaged communities that are geographically defined, “disadvantaged communities” means a geographic area meets the following criteria:

- Any census tract that is included as disadvantaged in [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST)

Applicants should describe how the project will effectively address the disproportionate and adverse cumulative impacts (human health, environmental, climate-related and others) that have affected and/or currently affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations, and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions. Adverse impacts may be the result of industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions and include the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts.

As applicable, applicants should demonstrate how the project benefits these affected communities and/or populations including those in the communities/populations that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the adverse impacts described above. Additionally, applicants should describe under 3.b. the extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project.

Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect people/communities of color, low income, tribal and indigenous populations and vulnerable populations including those identified above. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions.

Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include:

- Differential proximity and exposure to environmental hazards;
- Greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to genetic predisposition, age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or poor nutrition);
- Unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (e.g., subsistence fishing or farming);
- Cumulative effects from multiple stressors;
- Reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes due to language barriers, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources; and
- Degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.

Applicants are encouraged, as appropriate, to include data from EPA's [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST) as part of their application to help characterize and describe the affected communities/populations and area(s). Data from other sources (e.g., studies, census, and third-party reports) should also be included to give a more complete picture of the impacted communities and populations. CEJST analyses may be included as an optional attachment, which will not count towards the project narrative 10-page limit; see Sections I.B. and IV.A. of the NOFO.

b. Community Engagement (5 possible points)

In addition to the information included under a. above, applicants should describe the quality and extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations, especially local residents, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Section 5 - Project Sustainability (5 total possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO):

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate their ability to effectively promote and continue or replicate efforts after EPA funding for this project has ended, as described in Section I of the NOFO.

Section 6 - Budget (10 total possible points from Section V.A. of the NOFO)

This section of the project narrative is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A and must include a discussion of the applicant's approach to ensuring proper management of grant/cooperative agreement funds, a detailed budget narrative, as well as the itemized budget table below. An applicant's budget table and budget narrative must account for both federal funds and any non-federal voluntary cost share, if applicable. Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award. Additional guidance for developing the applicant's budget is available in

[RAIN-2019-G02, “Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance.”](#)

a. Budget Detail (4 possible points)

Whether the proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds.

Applicants should provide a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds. Applicants should use the instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table below to complete the detailed budget section of the project narrative. The budget detail and the budget table should be included in the project narrative and count towards the maximum 10-page limit. Additional budget documents, excluding the SF-424 and SF-424A forms, or project narratives pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed, as listed in Section III.C. of the NOFO. Applicants should include applicable rows of costs for each budget category in their budget table to accurately reflect the proposed project budget. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, installation or labor supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs (i.e., subawards, participant support costs), indirect costs, and total costs. If providing a voluntary cost share, the budget detail must clearly specify the amount of federal funding and the cost share amount for each category. For applicants proposing to implement a participant support cost or rebate program, the rebates are appropriately listed under the Other budget category as “Participant Support Costs.” See Appendix A for more information on participant support costs and [RAIN-2018-G05, “EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs.”](#)

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

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

- **Travel - Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-state and out-of-state, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.** Travel may be: integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g., inspections); related to proposed project activities (e.g., attendance at meetings); or to a technical training or workshop that supports effective implementation of the project activities. Only include travel costs for employees in the travel category. Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of contractors (including consultants), which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards and non-employee program participants (e.g., trainees), which are included in the "Other" category. Further, travel does not include bus rentals for group trips, which would be covered under the contractual category. Finally, if the applicant intends to use any funds for travel outside the United States, it must be specifically identified. All proposed foreign travel must be approved by EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs prior to being taken.
- **Equipment - Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.** Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts that are not included in the purchase price for the equipment. These types of proposed costs should be included in the "Other" category. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.1, "Equipment." The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project. If installation costs are included in the equipment costs, labor expenses shall be itemized with the detailed number of hours charged and the hourly wage. If the applicant has written procurement procedures that define a threshold for equipment costs that is lower than \$5,000, then that threshold takes precedence.
- **Supplies - "Supplies" means all tangible personal property other than "equipment."** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the "Other" category.
- **Contractual - Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual services (including consultant services) are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. [EPA's Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions](#) has detailed guidance available for differentiating between

contractors and subrecipients. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the “Other” category. EPA does not require applicants to identify specific contractors. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the anticipated scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known. Any proposed non-competed/sole-source contracts in excess of \$3,500 must include a justification. Note that it is unlikely that EPA will accept proposed sole source contracts for goods and services (e.g., consulting) that are widely available in the commercial market. Refer to [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for EPA’s policies on competitive procurements and encouraging the use of small and disadvantaged business enterprises.

- **Other - List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance; rental/lease of equipment or supplies; equipment service or maintenance contracts; printing or photocopying; participant support costs such as non-employee training stipends and travel, subsidies or rebates for purchases of pollution control equipment (such as a specified amount of funding for residential woodstove changeouts or truck owners to purchase cleaner trucks); and subaward costs. Applicants should describe the items included in the “Other” category and include the estimated amount of participant support costs in a separate line item. Additional information about participant support costs is contained in [RAIN-2018-G05, “EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs.”](#)

Subawards (e.g., subgrants) and participant support costs are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term “subaward” means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient even if the agreement is referred to as a contract. Rebates, subsidies, and similar one-time, lump-sum payments to program beneficiaries for purchase of eligible emission control technologies are considered participant support costs. Please refer to Appendix A for detailed guidance on funding projects and partnerships and how to correctly categorize these costs in the workplan budget. “Other” does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work as a separate line item in the “Other” category, and a description of the types of activities to be supported. Refer to [EPA’s Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions](#) for additional guidance.

- **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.** Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint

purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:

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

Additional indirect cost guidance is available in [RAIN-2018-G02, “Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements.”](#)

Example Budget Table (Required, part of the 10-page limit)

Line Item & Itemized Cost	EPA Funding ²	Required Cost Share
(1) Project Manager @ \$40/hr x 20 hrs/wk x 156 wks	\$124,800	\$18,720
(2) Project Staff @ \$30/hr x 20 hrs/wk x 156wks	\$93,600	\$14,040
TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$218,400	\$32,760
20% of Salary and Wages @ 20% x Total Personnel - Retirement, Health Benefits, FICA, SUI	\$43,680	\$6,552
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	\$43,680	\$6,552
Travel for Project Manager and staff: 500 mi/mo @\$0.55/mi X 12 mo	\$3,300	
TOTAL TRAVEL	\$3,300	
Equipment	\$20,000	
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	\$20,000	
Office and related supplies to support training	\$10,000	
TOTAL SUPPLIES	\$10,000	
Support Services Contract	\$50,000	
TOTAL CONTRACTUAL	\$50,000	
TOTAL OTHER	\$0	
(Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate = 20%)		
Federal Indirect Cost Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs	\$43,680	\$3,917
TOTAL INDIRECT	\$43,680	\$3,917
TOTAL EPA FUNDING	\$389,060	
TOTAL REQUIRED COST SHARE		\$43,229

² EPA Funding amount must be included on the SF-424 in Section 18.a and SF-424A in: cell 5(e) under Section A – Budget Summary; and Column (1) under Section B – Budget Categories.

Line Item & Itemized Cost	EPA Funding ²	Required Cost Share
TOTAL PROJECT COST³	\$432,289	

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

b. Reasonableness of Costs (3 possible points)

EPA will evaluate the reasonableness of the applicant’s budget based on the applicant’s narrative description of the budget and detailed breakout of requested funding for each work component or task. Provide a detailed description of every itemized cost, including how every cost relates to the project narrative and specific emission reduction activities. Instructions for what to include in the Budget Detail are described in Section 6.a. above.

Applicants must itemize the cost categories as listed below and the SF-424A form: personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs (subawards, participant support costs), indirect costs, and total costs. Round up to the nearest dollar and do not use any cents.

For applicants that provide a voluntary cost share/match or leveraged resources as described in Section III.B. of the NOFO and Section 6 above, the budget narrative must include a detailed description of how the applicant will obtain the cost share and leveraged resources and how the cost share funding and leveraged resources will be used. Proposed voluntary cost share included in the budget detail must also be included on the SF-424 and SF-424A. Leveraged resources should not be included in the SF-424 or SF-424A.

Recipients may issue subawards, contracts, or participant support costs to implement projects. Please refer to Appendix A for detailed guidance on these funding options and how to correctly categorize these costs in the workplan budget.

c. Expenditure of Awarded Funds (3 possible points)

³ Total Project Cost must be included on the SF-424 in Section 18.g and SF-424A in: cell 5(g) under Section A – Budget Summary; and column (5), Row k under Section B – Budget Categories.

Applicants should provide a detailed written description of the applicant’s approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

Section 7 - Attachments (As listed in Section IV.A of the NOFO; this information does not count towards the project narrative 10-page limit):

Project Team Biographies: Optional. Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for key staff, managers, and any other key personnel. If submitted, this should be referenced under Section 6.C. “Budget” of the workplan.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: Optional. The applicant will be required to submit this agreement if their application is selected for funding.

Partnership Letters: If applicable, letters of support that demonstrate strong, long-term involvement throughout the project from a variety of project partners are encouraged. Letters should specifically indicate how project partners and supporting organizations will participate in or directly assist in the design and performance of the project, or how obtaining support from project partners will allow the applicant to more effectively perform the project. Letters should be addressed to the applicant organization and included as attachments to the application. Please do not ask partners to submit letters directly to EPA.

C. Coalition Coverage

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

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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

Only eligible entities whose application(s) meet the threshold criteria in Section III.C. of this NOFO will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative, following the content requirements set forth in Part IV.B.** Each application will be rated using a point system. Applications will be evaluated based on a total of 100 points possible.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Total Possible Points	100
<p>1. <u>Project Summary and Approach:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applications based on the extent and quality of the applicant’s project summary, overall approach and detailed approach to measure project effectiveness (e.g. evaluation of knowledge or skills gained from outreach and training activities, collection of air quality monitoring data to demonstrate lower indoor PM concentrations as a result of changes to the operation or maintenance of a building). Specifically, EPA will evaluate the extent and quality of:</p> <p>A. (25 points) The overall proposed project, consistent with Section I.B and I.C. This includes the proposed project plan and its feasibility.</p> <p>B. (10 points) The applicant’s description of how much or how often the buildings or communities served by the project are impacted by wildfire smoke.</p> <p>C. (5 points) The applicant’s characterization of the population served by the project, such as the estimated number of people served, and the location and type of community (e.g., urban, rural, etc.).</p> <p>D. (5 points) How the proposed project addresses multiple hazards that may be concurrent with wildfire smoke (such as extreme heat, power outages, and airborne infectious disease outbreaks) and how the project improves overall capacity to comprehensively address indoor air quality issues.</p>	45
<p>2. <u>Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes and Performance Measures:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate:</p> <p>A. (5 points) The extent and quality to which the applicant identifies and proposes outputs and outcomes, as described in Section I.C.2. and 3.</p> <p>B. (5 points) The quality of the proposed performance measures and effectiveness of the applicant’s plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I.C. of this announcement.</p> <p>C. (5 points) The reasonableness of the proposed timeline including key milestones for specific tasks and the likelihood of completion of the project’s goals and objectives by project end.</p>	15
<p>3. <u>Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p>	15

<p>A. (5 points) Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in Section IV.B of the announcement.</p> <p>B. (5 points) History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative as described in Section IV.B. of the announcement, 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.</p> <p>C. (5 points) Staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items A. and B. of this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for sub-criteria A. and B. (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these sub-criteria.</p>	
<p>4. <u>Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applications based on the extent to which they demonstrate how the project will address the disproportionate and adverse (see below) human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect communities, including affected disadvantaged communities, described in Section I of the solicitation. As part of this evaluation, applications will be evaluated based on:</p> <p>A. (5 points) How the project benefits affected communities, including affected disadvantaged communities, that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing the impacts identified above that affect their community.</p> <p>B. (5 points) The extent to which the project addresses engagement with these affected communities, especially local residents in these communities who will be affected by the project, to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project.</p> <p>Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens and/or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect or have affected the disadvantaged communities described in this solicitation. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions. Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include: differential proximity</p>	<p>10</p>

<p>and exposure to adverse environmental hazards; greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to causes such as age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or limited access to quality nutrition); unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (for example, subsistence fishing or farming); cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes (due to causes such as lack of or ineffective language access programs, lack of programs to make processes accessible to persons with disabilities, inability to access traditional communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources); and degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.</p>	
<p>5. <u>Project Sustainability</u>: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate their ability to effectively promote and continue or replicate efforts after EPA funding for this project has ended, as described in Section I of the NOFO.</p>	5
<p>6. <u>Budget</u>: Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate applicants based on the extent and quality to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. (4 points) The proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type in the proper budget category for each activity the applicant is requesting funding. B. (3 points) The proposed costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes; and C. (3 points) The applicant’s approach, procedures, and controls will ensure that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. <p>An applicant’s SF-424, SF-424A and budget detail must account for both federal funds and any non-federal funds (see Section III.B.) Leveraged resources should not be included in the budget forms but should be discussed in the narrative portion of the budget detail; see Section IV. B.</p>	10

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III.C. of this NOFO. Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA evaluation team. Each application will be given a numerical score and will be rank ordered by the review panel. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the EPA selection official based on these reviews and rankings. Final funding decisions will be made by the EPA headquarters selection official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendations of the EPA evaluation team and the other factors listed in Section V.C. below.

C. Other Factors

In making the final funding decisions, the EPA headquarters selection official may also consider programmatic priorities and geographic diversity of funds, and distribution of awards between small and large set-aside projects as follows:

- 30% of available funds for smaller awards – awards ranging from \$100,000 up to \$350,000
- 70% of available funds for larger awards – awards ranging from \$350,000 up to \$2,000,000.

Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA award official.

According to the Fiscal Year 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act report language, no more than 25% (\$2,667,500) of the grant funding will go to recipients in any one State.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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

A. Award Notices

Following evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

- 1. Successful Applicants:** EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic or postal mail within 60 days of the closing date of this NOFO. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the Grants & Interagency Management Division (GIAMD).

Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to the applicant. The award notice, signed by the EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g. work plan), which must be approved by 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.

- 2. Unsuccessful Applicants:** EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail within 60 days of the closing date of this NOFO. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. Quarterly reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for the next quarter and a summary of expenditures are required. The final report shall be submitted to EPA within 120 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report must include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of quarterly reports will be established by EPA, after the grants are awarded. Award recipients may be provided with additional information and guidance on reporting performance measures and project progress after award.

Performance Measures. The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful processes and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. It is expected that the description of performance measures will directly relate to the project outcomes and outputs (see Section I.C.). The description of the performance measures will directly relate to the project's outcomes and outputs, including but not limited to:

- Overseeing subrecipients, and/or contractors and vendors;
- Tracking and reporting project progress on expenditures and purchases; and
- Tracking, measuring, and reporting accomplishments and proposed timelines/milestones.

The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the project will achieve?
- How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

C. Buy America Requirements

Certain projects under this competition are subject to the domestic preference sourcing requirements under the Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#) (P.L. 117-58, §§70911-70917) when using funds for the purchase of goods, products, and materials on any form of construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. The Buy America preference requirement applies to all of the iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used for the infrastructure project under an award for identified [EPA financial assistance funding programs](#).

These sourcing requirements require that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in Federally funded infrastructure projects must be produced in the United States. The recipient must implement these requirements in its procurements, and this article must flow down to all subawards and contracts at any tier. For legal definitions and sourcing requirements, the recipient must consult [EPA's Build America, Buy America website](#).

Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings grants are subject to the requirements of BABA, which requires applicants to comply with Buy America preference requirements or apply for a waiver for each infrastructure project. The following potentially eligible projects under this competition meet the definition of “infrastructure” and are subject to Buy America preference requirements under BABA:

- Initial preparation of community cleaner air spaces or cleaner air shelters.
- Significant improvements to buildings such as upgrades and repairs to HVAC units or systems and weatherization.
- Any other permanent public structure that meets the infrastructure definition in [M-22-11](#)

Projects that include Smoke Readiness Planning, outreach and training activities, and deployment of portable air cleaners, DIY air cleaners, and indoor and outdoor air quality monitoring devices are not considered “infrastructure” projects.

When supported by rationale provided in IIJA §70914, the recipient may submit a waiver to EPA. The recipient should request guidance on the submission instructions of an EPA waiver request from the EPA Project Officer. A list of approved EPA waivers is available on the [Build America, Buy America website](#).

In addition to BABA requirements, all procurements under grants may be subject to the domestic preference provisions of 2 CFR §200.322.

See “Build America, Buy America” clause in [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

D. Prevailing Wage Requirements

As required by section 314 of the Clean Air Act, grants for construction activities will be subject to prevailing wage requirements as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor under the Davis Bacon Related Acts authority. EPA will provide terms and conditions on Davis-Bacon compliance requirements in agreements that fund *Construction* as that term is defined at 40 CFR 33.103.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: IED Grants Administration Team
OAR 6609T
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20460

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail or email to the

contact person listed above. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the OAR Grants/Funding webpage: <http://www.epa.gov/grants/air-grants-and-funding>.

APPENDIX A – Further information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs

I. Background

The Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) includes a separate row for “contractual” costs and “other” costs. As noted in Section 6 under Section IV. B., the “other” cost category on the SF-424A should be used to cover both subawards and participant support costs. Depending on the project, these costs may be applicable to a Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings application. This appendix helps clarify these differences. Additional information about participant support costs is contained in [RAIN-2018-G05, “EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs.”](#)

If a recipient intends to fund the proposed project’s technologies (i.e., equipment and/or appliances) that they do not directly own, such as portable air cleaners and/or air monitoring equipment, the recipient may have the option to: (1) issue a contract; (2) make a subaward to an eligible entity; or (3) provide participant support costs to a program beneficiary. For options (2) and (3), the recipient may be able to fund technology and installation costs, but only subawards can be used to fund direct and indirect costs. If the grant recipient only intends to fund equipment and installation costs, the recipient may choose to provide participant support costs to a program beneficiary rather than a subaward.

II. Contracts

As described in 2 CFR § 200.331, a contract is for the purpose of obtaining goods and services for the recipient’s own use and creates a procurement relationship with the contractor. Characteristics indicative of a procurement relationship between the recipient and a contractor are when the contractor:

- Provides the goods and services within normal business operations;
- Provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers;
- Normally operates in a competitive environment;
- Provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the federal program; and
- Is not subject to compliance requirements of the federal program as a result of the agreement, though similar requirements may apply for other reasons.

Grant recipients that enter into procurement contracts, must comply with the applicable procurement provisions in 2 CFR § 200.317 through 200.327.

III. Subawards

Under 2 CFR § 200.1, subrecipient means a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a

grantee to carry out part of a federal program but does not include program beneficiaries receiving participant support costs; see Section IV. of this appendix below. Grant recipients may make subawards to subrecipients to carry out a portion of the grant project; in such case, the grant recipient is also known as a “pass-through entity.” Subawards establish a financial assistance relationship under which the subrecipient’s employees and contractors implement programs and projects to accomplish the goals and objectives of the grant. It is important to bear in mind that subrecipients are subject to the same federal requirements as the pass-through entity.

Under this competition, a non-federal entity is eligible to receive a subaward even if it is not eligible to receive a grant from EPA directly. While there may be some situations in which a subaward to an individual may be appropriate, those situations are rare.

Subrecipients only receive reimbursement for their actual direct or approved indirect costs and do not “profit” from the transaction. For-profit entities participating in grant activities are typically contractors rather than subrecipients.

EPA’s Award Official must approve subawards to for-profit entities and individuals on the basis of either a precise description of the subaward in the EPA approved budget and project narrative, or on a transaction-by-transaction basis.

The applicant’s project narrative and budget narrative should include detailed descriptions of any proposed subawards and include cost estimates for subawards as line items under the “Other” budget category in the SF-424A; see Section 6 in Section IV.B. Should a recipient decide to make a subaward that was not described in the approved project narrative and budget, the recipient must obtain prior written approval from EPA’s Award Official for the subaward.

If a recipient chooses to pass funds from its grant to other entities through subawards, the recipient must comply with applicable subaward provisions of 2 CFR Part 200, the EPA Subaward Policy, and EPA’s National Term and Condition for Subawards. Note that under 2 CFR § 200.331 through 200.333, there are extensive requirements for subrecipient monitoring and management that apply to pass-through entities.

Many of the federal administrative grant regulations in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500, as well as the grant terms and conditions in the assistance agreement, “flow down” to subrecipients receiving a subaward. Such requirements need to be identified in the written subaward agreement between the recipient and the subrecipient. Additionally, if a subrecipient intends to procure goods or services using targeted airshed grant funds, the subrecipient must comply with the applicable federal procurement standards in 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33 as these requirements also “flow down” to subrecipients.

There is no requirement for recipients to compete subawards under this NOFO; however, pass-through entities may choose to select subrecipients competitively provided this practice is consistent with applicable statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of their targeted airshed grant.

Recipients may use the subaward template contained in Appendix D of EPA’s Subaward Policy

to assist them in complying with the “subaward content” requirements; however, EPA does not mandate the use of this template.

IV. Participant Support Costs

Recipients may provide participant support costs (PSCs) to program beneficiaries to enable beneficiaries to participate in the recipient’s program or project. PSCs include rebates, subsidies, stipends, or other payments to program beneficiaries by a grantee, subrecipient, or contractor. For example, PSCs might be used for the purchase of eligible technologies. Program beneficiaries, rather than the grant recipient, would own the new technology.

PSCs differ from subawards in that the beneficiary is participating in the grant recipient’s project or program instead of implementing their own project or program. Program beneficiaries may include but are not limited to individual owner/operators, private or public fleet owners, or residents in the applicable area; however, program beneficiaries are not employees, contractors or subrecipients of the grant recipient. The following are examples of PSCs:

- Purchase of portable air cleaners
- Purchase of supplies for assembling DIY air cleaners
- Purchase of low-cost air monitoring equipment

Recipients may also use PSCs to make purchases on behalf of program beneficiaries. In some situations, this approach allows grant recipients to achieve economies of scale and/or take advantage of existing purchase contracts. Competitive procurement requirements apply to the grant recipient when the recipient takes this approach.

The federal administrative grant regulations in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500, as well as the grant terms and conditions in the recipient’s grant agreement, generally do not “flow down” to program beneficiaries receiving PSCs except that costs must be reasonable and incurred within the grant project period. Requirements for compliance with civil rights laws and ensuring that program beneficiaries are eligible to receive federal financial assistance are applicable as explained in [EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs](#). In addition, program beneficiaries must abide by requirements to ensure that the funds are used only for authorized purposes.

If a grantee, subrecipient, or contractor is issuing PSCs, it must have a written agreement in place. The written agreement should not be structured as a subaward agreement and should not refer to program beneficiaries as subrecipients consistent with 2 CFR § 200.1, “Subrecipient.” In addition, the written agreement should not include language requiring the program beneficiary to comply with the federal grant regulations at 2 CFR § Part 200, 2 CFR § Part 1500, or the terms and conditions found in the award between the EPA and the recipient, other than requiring that the costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable. The written agreement should also include the following:

- A description of the activities and amounts that will be supported by the PSCs;
- The program and/or statutory requirements that the program beneficiary must abide by in order to ensure that the funds are used only for authorized purposes;
- Specify which party will have title to the technologies (e.g., vehicles, engines, equipment and/or appliances), if any, purchased with PSCs;

- Source documentation requirements to ensure proper accounting of the PSCs; and
- Any reporting that must be submitted by the program beneficiary.

EPA's Award Official must approve PSCs on the basis of either a precise description of the PSCs in the EPA approved budget and work plan, or on a transaction-by-transaction basis. The applicant's project narrative and budget narrative should include detailed descriptions of any proposed PSCs and include cost estimates for PSCs as line items under the "Other" budget category. Should a recipient decide to issue PSCs that were not described in the approved work plan and budget, the recipient must obtain prior written approval from EPA's Award Official. Moreover, after a grant is awarded, should a recipient decide to modify the amount approved (upwards or downwards) for PSCs, prior written approval from EPA's Award Official is also required.

When creating budgets, applicants/recipients must exclude PSCs from Modified Total Direct Costs for calculation of indirect costs as required by 2 CFR § 200.1, "Modified Total Direct Costs."

Resources:

[RAIN-2018-G05, "EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs."](#)

[Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#)

[Grants Policy Issuance 16-01: EPA Subaward Policy for EPA Assistance Agreement Recipients,](#)
with attachments, includes:

- EPA Subaward Policy
- Appendix A: Distinctions Between Subrecipients and Contractors
- Appendix B: National Term and Condition for Subawards
- Appendix C: Model Programmatic Subaward Reporting Requirement
- Appendix D: Subaward Agreement Template