Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings
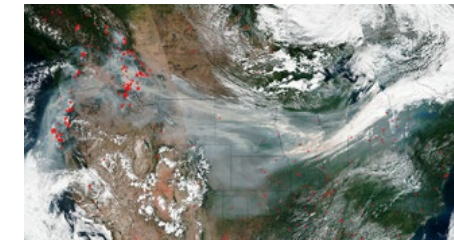
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Information Session
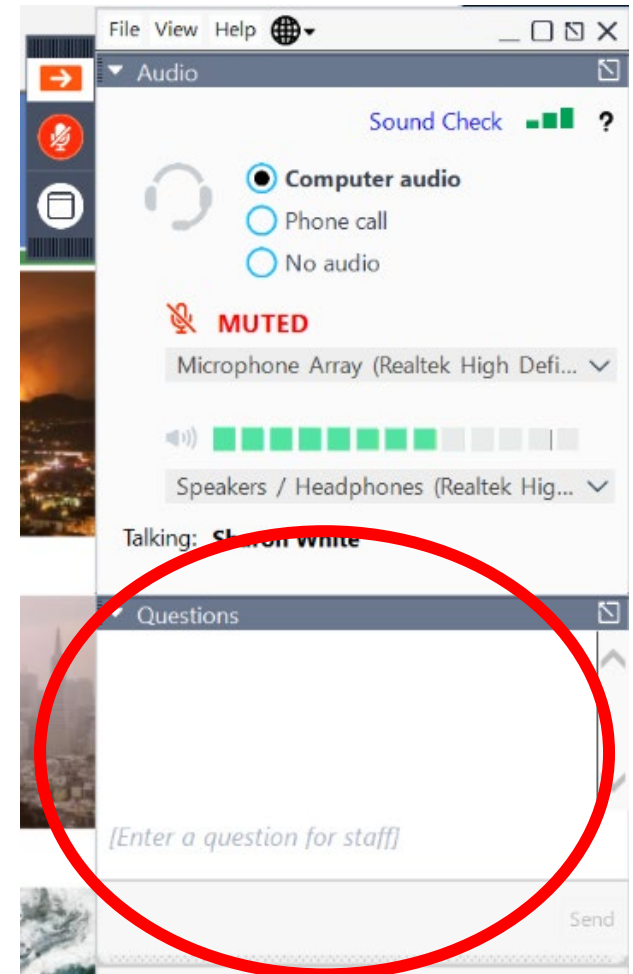
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Indoor Environments Division

April 10, 2023

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Welcome

- Slides from this presentation will be uploaded following today's session. A recording will be posted in the coming weeks.

- We will address as many questions as possible. If we run out of time, we will post questions and answers on the Air Grants page, which can be accessed at https://www.epa.gov/grants/wildfire-smoke-preparedness-community-buildings.

- To ask a question, please use the Questions function, as shown in the screenshot on the right.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Agenda

- Overview

- Eligible Entities

- Eligible Activities

- Key Dates

- Threshold Evaluation

- Cost Share Waiver Evaluation

- Merit Evaluation Process

- Merit Evaluation Criteria

- Application Process

- Questions and Answers

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Overview

Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings Grant Program

- **Program goal:** Improve public health protection against smoke from wildfires by enhancing preparedness in community buildings.

- **For details about the program:**
  - NOFO on Grants.gov:
    https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=347058
    - Applications are due by May 9, 11:59 p.m. EDT, via Grants.gov.
  - EPA grants webpage:
    https://www.epa.gov/grants/wildfire-smoke-preparedness-community-buildings
    - Questions and Answers are posted here weekly during the NOFO open period.
    - The slides and recording of this webinar also will be posted.
  - Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings Grant Program website:
    https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/wildfire-smoke-preparedness-community-buildings-grant-program

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Overview (continued)

- Awarding competitive **grants and cooperative agreements.**

- Provided under Section 103(b)(3) of the Clean Air Act as supplemented by authority provided in the 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act and the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act to fund abatement activities.

- **Total estimated funding** available for awards: **$10.67 million**
  - Approximately **13–18 grants, ranging from $100,000 to $2 million.**
  - Maximum of **25% of total funding may go to award recipients in any one state.**

- **10% cost share requirement** may be waived for facilities in economically distressed communities.

- Funded assistance agreements will have up to **3-year periods of performance.**

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Eligible Activities

Application activities should be designed to improve the capability and capacity of communities and buildings to effectively reduce indoor concentrations of air pollutants in wildfire smoke.

Eligible project types include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Smoke readiness planning
- Outreach and training
- Indoor and outdoor air quality monitoring
- Deployment of portable air cleaners
- Identification and preparation of cleaner air shelters
- Significant improvements to buildings, such as upgrading and repairing heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units or systems and weatherization necessary to protect occupants from hazards stemming from wildfires

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

See NOFO Section I.B. for additional details and requirements.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Eligible Entities

- States (including D.C., U.S. territories and possessions)

- Federally recognized tribes

- Public preschools

- Local educational agencies

- Public and private nonprofit organizations

See NOFO Section III.A. for detailed definitions.

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Key Dates

- March 22, 2023   Announcement

    o   Submit questions via email to IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov by April 27.

- May 9, 2023   Applications due

    o   **Earlier application submissions are encouraged** to navigate the application system.

- July 2023   Anticipated notification of selections

- September 2023   Anticipated awards

Register at **SAM.gov** and **Grants.gov** **now** if you think you may apply for a federal grant. **The process can take a month or longer for new registrants.**

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Threshold Evaluation Process

- **Step 1: Threshold Criteria Review** (Section III.C.)
  - Must meet ALL five threshold criteria to move on to Step 2:
    1. Substantially comply with submission instructions and content.
    2. 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. Cannot request more than $2 million.
    4. Cannot submit more than one application (if more are submitted, EPA will contact the applicant to determine which ones to withdraw).
    5. Must describe how much or how often the building or communities served by the project are impacted by wildfire smoke.
  - Applications are also reviewed to determine if any activities are ineligible for funding (see Section III.D.).

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Cost Share Waiver Evaluation

- There is a **10% cost share requirement** under this announcement.

- Cost sharing may be waived for facilities located in "economically distressed communities."

  o Census tract above the 70th percentile for low income, unemployment rate or less than high school education using EJSCREEN (see Section III.B.).

- Requests to waive the cost sharing requirement will be reviewed according to the criteria detailed in Section III.B. of the NOFO.

- See the chat for links to helpful resources for using EJSCREEN.

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Merit Evaluation Process

- **Step 2: Evaluation Criteria** (Section V.A.)

Evaluation Criteria	Score
1. Project Summary and Approach	45
2. Environmental Results — Outputs, Outcomes and Performance Measures	15
3. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance	15
4. Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities	10
5. Project Sustainability	5
6. Budget	10
Total Possible Points	100

- See Section IV.B. for Project Narrative instructions, format and content.

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Merit Evaluation Process (continued)

- Each eligible application will be evaluated by an EPA evaluation team.

- Proposals are ranked and scored by criteria in Section V.A.

- The EPA evaluation team will provide preliminary funding recommendations to the EPA Headquarters Selection Official based on the proposal scores.

- Final funding decisions will be made by the Selection Official based on ranking and preliminary recommendations of the evaluation team and other factors.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Merit Evaluation Process (continued)

- The selection official may also consider the following other factors:

  o Programmatic priorities

  o Geographic diversity

  o Distribution of awards between small and large set-aside projects:

    ▪ 30% of available funds for smaller awards ranging from $100,000 to $350,000

    ▪ 70% of available funds for larger awards ranging from $350,000 to $2 million

- In addition, no more than 25% of total funding may go to award recipients in any one state.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Merit Evaluation Criteria:
1. Project Summary and Approach (45 Points)

EPA will evaluate the applicant's project summary, overall approach and detailed approach to measure project effectiveness:

A. **(25 points)** The overall proposed project, consistent with Section I.B. and I.C: This includes the proposed project plan and its feasibility.

B. **(10 points)** Description of how much or how often the buildings or communities served by the project are impacted by wildfire smoke.

C. **(5 points)** Characterization of the population served by the project, such as the estimated number of people served.

D. **(5 points)** How the proposed project addresses multiple hazards that may be concurrent with wildfire smoke (e.g., extreme heat, power outages, airborne infectious disease outbreaks) and how the project improves overall capacity to comprehensively address indoor air quality issues.

Merit Evaluation Criteria:
2. Environmental Results (15 points)

A. **(5 points)** The extent and quality to which the applicant identifies and proposes outputs and outcomes, as described in Sections I.C.2. and I.C.3.

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.

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.

Merit Evaluation Criteria:
3. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (15 points)

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.

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 toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not.

C. **(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.

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Merit Evaluation Criteria:
4. Environmental Justice (10 points)

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.

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.

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Merit Evaluation Criteria:
5. Project Sustainability (5 points)

(5 points) 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.

Merit Evaluation Criteria:
6. Budget (10 points)

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.

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.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Application Process: How to Apply

1. **Register your organization with SAM.gov.**

2. **Register your organization with Grants.gov.**

   - Applications must be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov.

   - If you registered previously, please verify that your account is still active.

   - If not currently registered with Grants.gov, designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and begin the registration process as soon as possible.

   - The registration process requires that your organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM). The process for obtaining both could take several weeks.

   - See the "How do I apply for a grant under the Inflation Reduction Act?" webpage: https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/how-do-i-apply-grant-under-inflation-reduction-act

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Application Process: How to Apply
(continued)

3. **Go to the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.**
   https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=347058

4. **Apply through Grants.gov.**

   Click the red "Apply" button in the upper right and create a Workspace.

   APPLY NOW

Note: All applications must be submitted through the "Workspace" feature. Information can be found on the Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Application Process: How to Apply
(continued)

5. **Write your project narrative.**

    *   Include the cover page and workplan; cannot exceed 10 pages.

    *   Must substantially comply with the specific instructions, format and content as defined in Section IV.B.

    *   Save as a Word document or PDF.

    *   **Be aware:** The budget narrative and detail are part of the 10-page limit of the project narrative. It will **not** be reviewed if the project narrative is already 10 pages and the budget detail/narrative is included as a separate attachment.

6. **Complete the mandatory forms.**
    *   See page 20 of the NOFO: SF-424, SF-424A, EPA Forms 4700-4 and 5700-54.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Application Process: How to Apply
(continued)

7. Use the "Other Attachments" form to submit the mandatory documents, if applicable.

8. Use the "Other Attachments" form to submit the following optional documents:

- Project team biographies
- Support letters, if applicable
- Maps, data, analyses and results that—
  - Characterize the population served
  - Describe wildfire smoke impacts in the project area
- Data, analyses and results from EJSCREEN (or other EJ-focused mapping tools)

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Application Process: How to Apply
(continued)

9. **Grants.gov: Fill out the required grant application forms and upload all required and optional attachments.**

   - Download PDFs of the forms, fill them out offline, and then upload back to grants.gov, or
   - Complete the forms online as webforms.

PACKAGE FORMS:

Mandatory Forms
(Click to Preview)

» Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) [V2.1]
» EPA Form 4700-4 [V2.1]
» Project Narrative Attachment Form [V1.2]
» EPA KEY CONTACTS FORM [V1.1]
» Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) [V1.0]
» Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) [V1.1]
» Other Attachments Form [V1.2]

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Application Process: How to Apply
(continued)

10. Grants.gov

- The "Check Application" button runs a validation process to ensure all the forms are complete. If the validation fails, a list of errors will be displayed.

- Once all forms are in "passed" status, the "Sign and Submit" button will be active.
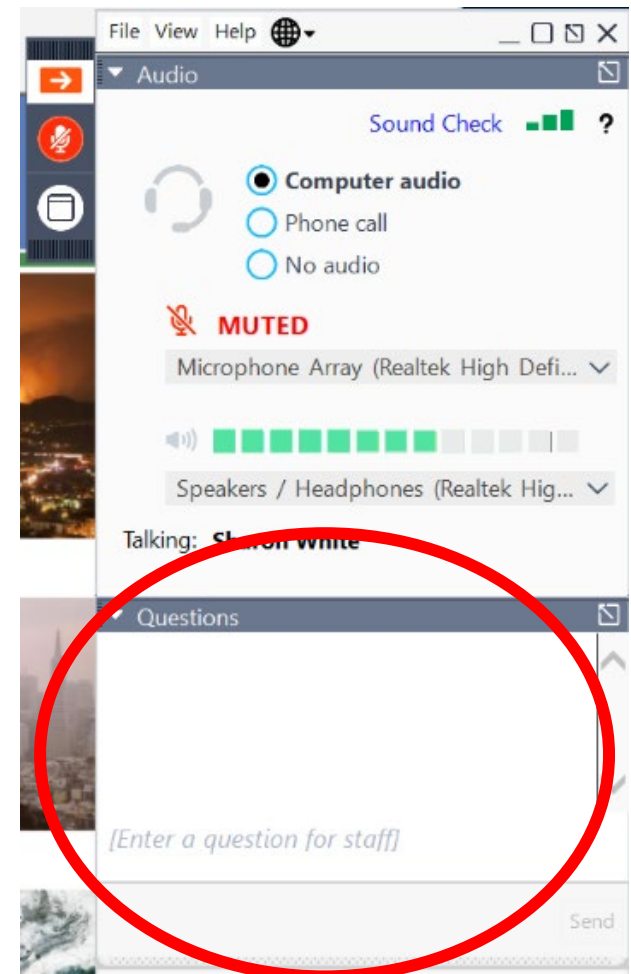
Application Process: Helpful Reminders

- **Create/verify your Grants.gov account now.**
  - The registration process requires that your organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (www.SAM.gov).
  - Grants.gov now requires users to sign up for and use the "Workspace" feature when applying for opportunities.

- **Be aware of support time.**
  - Minor problems with application submittal are **not** uncommon.
  - Grants.gov offers 24-hour support; however, some issues may **take a few days** to resolve.

- **Submit early.**
  - Late applications will not be accepted.
  - See Section IV.A for full Grants.gov instructions.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Questions and Answers

- To ask a question, please use the Questions function, as shown in the screenshot on the right.

- **Please note:** Participant questions will be addressed in the order they are received.

- We will address as many questions as possible. If we run out of time, we will post questions and answers on the Air Grants page, which can be accessed at https://www.epa.gov/grants/wildfire-smoke-preparedness-community-buildings.

- Slides from this presentation will be uploaded following today's session. A recording will be posted in the coming weeks.

- Submit additional questions to IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov by April 27.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Thank you!

Slides, Q&A and a recording will be posted in the next few weeks at https://www.epa.gov/grants/wildfire-smoke-preparedness-community-buildings.

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