

**Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
EPA-OAR-ORIA-23-04
Questions and Answers, as of **May 3, 2023**
Includes Webinar Questions from April 10, 2023**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting applications for funding under the Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings grants competition (EPA-OAR-ORIA-23-04).

The Notice of Funding Opportunity application information is available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347058>. The deadline to apply is **May 9, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. (ET)**.

EPA hosted a Funding Opportunity Information Session on April 10, 2023. View a recording of the session here: <https://youtu.be/Nziu9TaztaE>

This document will include the questions from the IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov email box and questions asked during the information session.

Please review all questions. If you have any additional questions, please email IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov by **April 27, 2023**. Questions marked **NEW** or **UPDATED** have been added or revised since the last posting of the questions and answers document

Contents

I. General Questions	2
II. Funding	3
III. Administrative, including contents of applications	4
IV. Allowable Activities	9
V. Allowable Costs	9
VI. Eligibility, including partner eligibility	14
VII. Other	19

I. General Questions

Question 1: How can potential grant applicants learn more?

Answer 1:

- **Informational Webinar:** EPA held an information session on April 10, 2023. Participants had the opportunity to have their questions answered by EPA in a public forum. The recorded webinar is posted here: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/wildfire-smoke-preparedness-community-buildings> and the answered questions are included in this document.
- **Review the *Question/Answer document* on the website:** Applicants are encouraged to review the questions and answers document for further information about this grant program and NOFO, available at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/wildfire-smoke-preparedness-community-buildings>. EPA will respond to questions from applicants regarding:
 - Threshold eligibility clarification criteria;
 - Administrative issues related to the submission of the application;
 - Requests for about any of the language or provisions in the announcement; and,
 - Compliance with regulatory requirements and EPA guidance for competition for procurement of professional services and equipment purchases and entering into proper subawards.
- **Email a Question to EPA:** Applicants may email questions to IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov. Questions must be submitted via email before April 27, 2023. EPA will answer relevant questions and post them in the Question/Answer document the following week while the NOFO is open at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/wildfire-smoke-preparedness-community-buildings>. All applicants are encouraged to check the document regularly.

Question 2: Are there flexibilities in this grant process due to the COVID-19 pandemic (See page 1 of the NOFO)?

Answer 2: Yes, 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](#).

Question 3: Can you please advise the information that should be submitted with the intent to apply, as well as the submission instructions, such as whether it should be submitted via email, mail, or some other method, and the applicable address?

Answer 3: The intent to apply is optional but appreciated. A couple of sentences via email to IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov regarding your organization, potential project, and any additional information will suffice.

Question 4: I have a couple of questions regarding the Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings program.

First, page 1 of the attached program NOFO mentions an information session scheduled for April 10, however, no additional information is provided. Can you please advise where I can find additional information regarding the session, or if there is a link to register?

Also, page 1 mentions an optional intent to apply that is due April 21, 2023, however, no additional information is provided. Can you please advise the information that should be submitted with the intent to apply, as well as the submission instructions, such as whether it should be submitted via email, mail, or some other method, and the applicable address?

Answer 4: EPA will host an information session webinar for potential applicants on April 10th at 3:00 – 4:00pm Eastern. During the webinar, EPA will provide an overview of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the application process. [Register here](#).

The intent to apply is optional. By Friday, April 21, please send a couple of brief sentences via email to IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov regarding your intent to apply, your organization, potential project and amount.

Question 5: The Appendix A to my NOFO is blank. Has a revised NOFO been issued?

Answer 5: Appendix A was inadvertently omitted from the NOFO when it was first published. A corrected version is now available on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347058>).

II. Funding

Question 1: How much money is EPA giving out from this NOFO (See Section II.A. on page 12 of the NOFO)?

Answer 1:

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

Question 2: Is this one-time money?

Answer 2: At this time, money for the competitive grant program has been appropriated for fiscal years 2022 and 2023. No additional money is appropriated at this time.

Question 3: Is cost-sharing required under this program?

Answer 3: There is a 10% cost share requirement for awards under this announcement. Cost sharing may be waived for facilities located in economically distressed communities. See Section III.B. of the NOFO for more information:

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 EJSSCREEN.

In order to waive the cost-sharing requirement, applications that propose projects that target specific facility(s) must provide EJSSCREEN 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 EJSSCREEN 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.

Question 4: Does a Tribe’s funded grant located within a state go toward the “count” against the 25% limit on funding in one state?

Answer 4: No. Tribes are considered sovereign nations; funding awarded to a Tribe would be considered separately for the purpose of ensuring that no more than 25% of funding is awarded to recipients in any one State (see Sections II.A. and V.C. of the NOFO).

III. Administrative, including contents of applications

Question 1: In the Past Performance section of the current NOFO (starting on page 23 of NOFO), the instructions ask for the applicant’s performance information for the past three years. Can you please clarify to

me if that means the applicant organization's performance information, or is this specifically for the primary investigator who is applying for this grant?

Answer 1: Section IV.B.3.a. Past Performance requests information on past or current assistance agreements that the applicant (as an organization) is performing or has performed. Information about the past experience of specific project managers or staff could be relevant to Section IV.B.3.c. Staff Expertise, but is not required in the Past Performance section.

Question 2: Could you please forward me to some guidance about how to complete Section A of the SF-424A budget form?

Answer 2: Instructions for SF-424A can be found on Grants.gov (see "Download Instructions" link at the top of the page): <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf424-fid.html?formId=241>

Instructions to all EPA grantee forms can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grantee-forms>

Question 3: Can you also please tell me what is the smallest font and margins that we can use for our application?

Answer 3: There is no minimum font size and margin for the application. Note however that Section III.C.1.a. (page 15) of the NOFO states (emphasis added): "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."

Question 4: The budget form provided on Grants.gov is designated as "non-construction." Our project is for the upgrading of an existing HVAC system so that we can provide a healthy harbor during fire season and other poor air quality days. I assume this is considered construction. If I am correct, is there an alternative budget form that we should use?

Answer 4: If a project involves construction, applicants can still use Standard Form 424A "Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs." Report construction costs in Section B, Line 6.g. "Construction." Costs associated with upgrading an existing HVAC system may or may not fit the category of "construction" costs. See the instructions for SF-424A for a description of the types of costs that should be reported on Line 6.g. on Grants.gov (see "Download Instructions" link at the top of the page): <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf424-fid.html?formId=241>

Question 5: Regarding Section V.A. "Evaluation Criteria", 3.A. "Programmatic Capability and Past Performance," that should only discuss assistance agreements, but not other federal grants. Is that correct?

Answer 5: Applicants should 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.

See Section IV.B.II. "Section 3 – Programmatic Capability and Past Performance" for more details about what to include in the Project Narrative, and Section V.A.3. for how programmatic capability and past performance will be evaluated.

Question 6: Does the past performance and reporting requirement inherently negatively impact junior researchers or is this somehow taken into account?

Answer 6: 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 past performance criteria (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). See the Evaluation Criteria for Programmatic Capability and Past Performance in Section V.A. Item 3 of the NOFO for more information.

Question 7: With the restrictions on totals per state, would you consider partial funding to an applicant? If so, would it benefit an applicant to break down their proposal into "phases" (with budget per phase) to show how EPA could fund just part of the proposal?

Answer 7: As stated in Section II.C. of the NOFO, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects in appropriate circumstances. Applicants should break down their budget as much as possible to accurately portray the different costs for the project. See Section IV.B.II. "Section 6 – Budget" for an example budget table (page 30-31).

Question 8: If an applicant wanted to work in multiple states, does that need to be detailed in the budget narrative? I.e, the amount of funding allotted for each state?

Answer 8: No, applicants do not need to demonstrate how much funding will be spent in each state in their application. According to the Fiscal Year 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act report language, no more than 25% of the grant funding will go to recipients in any one State (see Section V.C. of the NOFO). EPA will evaluate the program's compliance with this requirement based on where the applicant's organization is located.

Question 9: Does the cover page count towards the 10-page narrative limit or is it in addition to the 10 page limit?

Answer 9: The cover page is included in the 10-page limit.

Question 10: Is the 10-page limit single space or double space?

Answer 10: Line spacing is up to the applicant. There is a 10-page limit on the project narrative, regardless of spacing.

Question 11: Do you have a suggestion on the of length of Key Staff bios in supplementary materials (outside the 10page limit)?

Answer 11: There is no requirement of length of staff bios in the supplementary material. Typical EPA grant applications are about a paragraph or so per person to describe past experience.

Question 12: We already have a UEI number. How long will it take to register in Grants.gov?

Answer 12: This should be an immediate process. The system will validate the input to determine if there are any errors or missing documents. If all information is present, it should immediately generate a UEI number.

Question 13: We are registered in SAM.gov through FEMA. I've never applied through grants.gov - once we hit 'Apply Now', will it save our workspace? Or do we need to do everything all at once?

Answer 13: It is our understanding that these seems use an autosave function. If there is a "save" button, we recommend using that also since applicants may not be able to complete registration and application in one session.

Question 14: One of the forms was a "Non-Construction" budget form. What if our project involves construction?

Answer 14: If a project involves construction, applicants can still use Standard Form 424A "Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs." Report construction costs in Section B, Line 6.g. "Construction."

Question 15: We are in the process of completing our application for EPA-OAR-ORIA-23-04. In our last application to an EPA program each subaward was listed in the justification, but their scope of work/details were in an appendix. Is this allowed in this NOFO?

Answer 15: As stated in the NOFO under Appendix A, Section III "Subawards": "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."

Please also review the Contracts and Subawards section of the "Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation" that are linked under Section I.E. on page 11 of the NOFO (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>), in particular: "Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part200?toc=1>). Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their application. However, if they do, the

fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the firm's role in preparing the application. For additional guidance applicants should review EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/best-practice-guide-procuring-services-supplies-and-equipment-under-epa-assistance>)."

Question 16: Do references/citations count towards the 10-page limit or can the list of citations referenced in the narrative be submitted as an attachment? **NEW**

Answer 16: References/citations should be included in the 10-page limit in the project narrative.

Question 17: For Form 424A, in the "Grant Program, Function, or Activity" field, how much detail should we include? Is it acceptable to say something like "HVAC upgrade," without noting the per unit cost or associated labor? The online budget form (SF-424A) shows the budget category "construction," but this designation is not reflected in the NOFO. I had originally labeled our HVAC upgrade as "Equipment" in the narrative budget; should I keep this label for the online budget form, or place these costs under "construction," which seems more appropriate. **NEW**

Answer 17: The "Grant Program, Function, or Activity" field in SF-424A should match or align with the budget table in the project narrative (see pages 30-31 of the NOFO for an example budget table). An HVAC upgrade should include the cost of the equipment itself as "Equipment" or "Supplies" based on the criteria described on page 28 of the NOFO, as well as the labor costs for installing the equipment as "Personnel", "Contractual", or "Other" as appropriate based on the definitions on pages 27-29 of the NOFO. "Construction" costs, if any, should be listed on SF-424A, Line 6.g. and a "Construction" category may be added to the budget table in the project narrative. Note that "Construction" costs are defined in the instructions for SF-424A on Grants.gov (see "Download Instructions" link at the top of the page): <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf424-fid.html?formId=241>

Question 18: The *Other Attachments Form [V 1.2]* in www.grants.gov has a "Mandatory Other Attachment" section that has a red asterisk next to it, making it a required attachment. We can't tell from this wording of the NOFO what exactly goes into that section. We have the documents noted below [on page 20 of the NOFO] in the "Optional Other Attachment(s)" section. Can you please clarify this? **NEW**

Answer 18: All relevant documents from the list of "Optional Attachment Documents" on page 20 of the NOFO should be submitted via the "Mandatory Other Attachment" in grants.gov.

IV. Allowable Activities

Question 1: Does smoke readiness planning include developing construction documents for future buildings?

Answer 1: Developing construction documents for future buildings should be part of a comprehensive smoke management plan for the community where the need for those buildings and features would be identified. Smoke readiness planning is a comprehensive approach to addressing wildfire smoke and would generally include additional activities beyond developing construction documents.

Question 2: I live in a community where people burn leaves to clean their lawn. These are not wildfires, but they are terrible. Would community air quality monitoring projects designed to increase public awareness be acceptable for this RFA?

Answer 2: This Notice of Funding Opportunity is limited to wildfire smoke-related activities. Activities addressing the type of burning that you've described would not be eligible.

Question 3: Would portable air purifiers specifically created for removal of dense wildfire smoke and toxic gas pollutants be eligible for grants?

Answer 3: If these portable air purifiers are commercially available or commonly used DIY air cleaners, deployment of these devices is one of the eligible activities described in Section I.B. of the NOFO.

If these portable air purifiers are being developed as part of a research project, that may or may not be an eligible activity. 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. (See Section III.D.1.a. of the NOFO.)

In either case, note that 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. (See Section III.D.1.c. of the NOFO.)

Question 4: I am part of an academic research team which is developing new air quality monitoring capabilities. The fundamental research has been completed, but field testing has not been done. Would design and field deployment of prototype air quality monitors be eligible for funding?

Answer 4: 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. (See Section III.D.1.a. of the NOFO)

Question 5: Our organization primarily has done outreach to homeless and disabled people stuck outside or in homes providing them masks and air purifiers. We think this is definitely meaningful from an environmental justice perspective, but we are struggling to conceive of a link to public buildings. Does informing these folks about cleaner air centers in public buildings count under this grant? What are other potential eligible activities for these populations?

Answer 5: Outreach and training are among the eligible activities under this grant program as described in Section I.B. of the NOFO. Informing unhoused populations or people with disabilities about cleaner air centers may be part of an eligible outreach project. Section I.B. of the NOFO describes the eligible activities under this program, some of which may be appropriate for that population as well.

Question 6: In the NOFO section on outreach, is it outreach and training to building professionals that will lead to better buildings, or could that include outreach on how people can be safe from wildfire smoke in their homes?

Answer 6: Both of these examples of outreach and training activities would be consistent with the eligible activities described in Section I.B. of the NOFO.

Question 7: Would health care facilities such as hospitals or clinics be considered "public buildings or buildings that serve the public?"

Answer 7: Yes, health care facilities can be considered public buildings or buildings that serve the public, and activities in these facilities would be eligible for funding under this program provided the applicant is an eligible entity. See Section III.A. of the NOFO for definitions of eligible entities. It would be helpful to describe in the application when and how these facilities will be open to and/or serve the public, including information that characterizes the population served by the project as described in Evaluation Criterion 1.C. (see Section V.A. "Evaluation Criteria").

Question 8: Could funding be used to augment a current program that provides funds to local air districts for the establishment of clean air centers?

Answer 8: Yes, this funding may be used to augment existing programs with related goals and activities. Please note that if you intend to count costs from existing programs toward the required cost share, those costs must be incurred during the project period of this grant. If you are submitting an application for the same or virtually the same project, see the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#) for applicable information about duplicate funding.

Question 9: Can grants be used to install new heat pumps in community or office buildings?

Answer 9: Generally no, the installation of heat pumps would not be an eligible activity under this grant program. Eligible activities will reduce indoor concentrations of air pollutants in wildfire smoke, especially particulate matter (PM). See Section I.B. of the NOFO for more information.

V. Allowable Costs

Question 1: Can you please confirm the award amounts per year? The example budget provided on page 30 describes salary estimates for 3 years. Are we supposed to submit a 3-year budget and that total funding pertains to the small (\$100,000-\$350,000) and large awards (\$350,001 to \$2,000,000)? Or are the small and large awards describing per year (1-year budgets)?

Answer 1: The amount of the award is for the entirety of the expected 3-year period of performance. The budget should reflect proposed costs for the full 3-year period of performance.

Question 2: Should I include our subrecipients, participant support costs, and honoraria in the "Other" category?

Answer 2: These costs belong in the 'Other' category and honoraria would be considered a participant support cost. Honoraria would only be allowable if they meet the cost principles under 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles (Cost Principles). The costs must be reasonable, incurred within the project period and otherwise allocable to the EPA assistance agreement, and adequately supported by accounting records. See EPA's Participant Support Cost guidance, <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/documents/epa-guidance-on-participant-support-costs.pdf>.

Question 3: I am seeking clarification on the 10% cost share requirement. Based on the example budget shown on page 30 of the NOFO, it looks like we identify exact line items in our budget that are the ones our organization will be responsible for (in full or in part) vs. the line items we are asking for EPA to cover through this grant. As long as the total requested from EPA is no more than 90% of the total project cost, then we have met the cost-share requirement. It is NOT a requirement that we cover 10% across-the-board, i.e., a 10% match of funds across each item. Is this correct?

Answer 3: The required 10% cost share amount is calculated based on the total project cost, and applicants may choose to cover that amount in any combination of budget categories, as appropriate for their situation. See page 30 in Section IV.B. of the NOFO for an example budget table reflecting the required cost share.

Question 4: We are considering applying and proposing a project that would capitalize on work we are doing now to provide portable air cleaners and air monitoring equipment to schools, from now through July 2023. If we identify in our budget the value of the air cleaners and monitors that we are giving to schools now as part of the total project costs but that is on the "CDPHE-cost share" side of the budget, not requested from EPA, does that count towards our cost-share requirement? The project we'd want to implement with the EPA funds would not be feasible without the investment CDPHE is making currently into providing the air cleaners/monitors to schools now, though, the timing is such that the provision of air cleaners/monitors would occur before the funds from EPA for the other work we propose would be awarded.

Answer 4: In Section IV.B.II. of the NOFO under "Section 6 – Budget" there is an example budget table (see page 30-31) demonstrating how applicants can express the total EPA funding requested, the total amount being counted toward the required cost share, and the total project cost. All costs, including those contributed as part of the required cost share, should be assigned to budget categories as demonstrated in the example

table and described in Section IV.B.II. "Section 6 – Budget." Please note that all costs, including those counted toward the cost share, need to be incurred during the project period of the grant.

Question 5: It looked like the NOFO was implying that in-kind personnel effort could be allocated as the cost-share. i.e., if we have staff time allocated to this project but are not requesting funding from EPA to pay for this staff time, that can be allocated in the cost-share portion of the budget. Is that correct?

Answer 5: Existing staff time, when dedicated to activities supporting the proposed project, may be counted toward the required cost share. See Section IV.B.II. "Section 6 – Budget" for an example budget table (page 30-31) demonstrating how the required cost share should be expressed, including assigning all costs to budget categories as described in Section IV.B.II. "Section 6 – Budget."

Question 6: The community buildings that we are considering are not physically within a disadvantaged census tract, but draw from community members in adjacent areas that are disadvantaged zones. Would this application meet that criterion?

Answer 6: Section III.B. of the NOFO describes the criteria for how the cost-share waiver is evaluated. For this case in particular, see the third paragraph in the section: "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."

Question 7: Is the 10% cost sharing across-the-budget, or, can an applicant identify specific areas where they can provide services that account for 10% of the total effort?

Answer 7: The required 10% cost share amount is calculated based on the total project cost, and applicants may choose to cover that amount in any combination of budget categories, as appropriate for their situation. See page 30-31 in Section IV.B. of the NOFO for an example budget table reflecting the required cost share that demonstrates how applicants can express the total EPA funding requested, the total amount being counted toward the required cost share, and the total project cost. All costs, including those contributed as part of the required cost share, should be assigned to budget categories as demonstrated in the example table and described in Section IV.B.II. "Section 6 – Budget."

Question 8: Our proposed idea involves capitalizing on work we are currently funding to provide air monitors and air cleaners to facilities. This significantly reduces the amount of funds we would need to implement this project. Is there a way to reflect this as the "10% cost share"? E.g., can we demonstrate a total budget and then show how we are covering at least 10% of it internally and then asking for funding for the remaining 90%?

Answer 8: In Section IV.B.II. of the NOFO under “Section 6 – Budget” there is an example budget table (see page 30-31) demonstrating how applicants can express the total EPA funding requested, the total amount being counted toward the required cost share, and the total project cost. All costs, including those contributed as part of the required cost share, should be assigned to budget categories as demonstrated in the example table and described in Section IV.B.II. “Section 6 – Budget.”

Question 9: Can the 10% cost share requirement be fulfilled by existing staff time/FTE?

Answer 9: Yes, existing staff time, when dedicated to activities supporting the proposed project, may be counted toward the required cost share. See Section IV.B.II. “Section 6 – Budget” for an example budget table (page 30-31) demonstrating how applicants can express the total EPA funding requested, the total amount being counted toward the required cost share, and the total project cost. All costs, including those contributed as part of the required cost share, should be assigned to budget categories as demonstrated in the example table and described in Section IV.B.II. “Section 6 – Budget.”

Question 10: Is the required 10% cost share based on grant amount funded or total project costs?

Answer 10: The 10% cost share should be based on the total project cost.

See Section IV.B.II. “Section 6 – Budget” for an example budget table (page 30-31) demonstrating how applicants can express the total EPA funding requested, the total amount being counted toward the required cost share, and the total project cost. All costs, including those contributed as part of the required cost share, should be assigned to budget categories as demonstrated in the example table and described in Section IV.B.II. “Section 6 – Budget.”

Question 11: Can you speak more about the 10% cost share?

Answer 11: The required 10% cost share amount is calculated based on the total project cost, and applicants may choose to cover that amount in any combination of budget categories, as appropriate for their situation. See page 30 in Section IV.B. of the NOFO for an example budget table reflecting the required cost share that demonstrates how applicants can express the total EPA funding requested, the total amount being counted toward the required cost share, and the total project cost. All costs, including those contributed as part of the required cost share, should be assigned to budget categories as demonstrated in the example table and described in Section IV.B.II. “Section 6 – Budget.”

Question 12: Is there a budget threshold for HVAC system upgrades?

Answer 12: There is a limit of \$2 million for one application. There are no specific budget thresholds for specific items or activities within an application. Budgets will be evaluated for reasonableness of costs. See Section V.A of the NOFO for evaluation criteria for budgets.

Question 13: Previous EPA grants require large purchases to go through a procurement process where at least 3 different bids/quotes are received and reviewed. Is this opportunity subject to a procurement process?

Answer 13: With very few exceptions, recipients must follow a competitive process when using EPA funds to purchase supplies, equipment and professional services in amounts that exceed their “micro-purchase” threshold. Micro-purchase amounts generally do not exceed \$10,000 (see [2 CFR 200.1](#)). For purchases that cost more than the micro-purchase threshold but less than the simplified acquisition threshold described at [2 CFR 200.1](#) (currently set at \$250,000), recipients may use [2 CFR 200.320\(a\)\(2\)](#) small purchase procedures and solicit offers from an adequate number of sources, taking Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) considerations into account, without formally advertising or otherwise publicizing the contracting opportunity. Procurements in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold are subject to the formal competitive requirements of [2 CFR 200.319](#) and [2 CFR 200.320\(b\)](#). For more information, see the *Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements*: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/documents/best-practice-guide-for-procuring-services-supplies-equipment.pdf>.

Question 14: Regarding the 10% cost share, is there any requirement that the cost share must be a non-federal funding source? Or, is it OK for the cost-share to be covered by leveraging another federal grant? (For example, in-kind personnel support for this project, where those personnel receive salary from another federal funding source; and/or supplies and operating expenses that contribute to the project which are funding from a separate funding source - provided in both situations that the work completed simultaneously meets the objectives and requirements of the other grant/federal funding source as well)? **NEW**

Answer 14: The 10% Cost Share cannot be met by leveraging because leveraging can include ineligible costs. Cost share is subject to the applicable provisions of 2 CFR § 200.306, *Cost sharing or matching* and may only be met with eligible and allowable costs. Cost share may, in rare cases, be met by other Federal funds so long as the statute authorizing the other federal funding provides that the federal funds may be used to meet a cost share requirement on a federal grant or cooperative agreement, the costs are allowable, and they meet the requirements of 2 CFR 200.306.

VI. Eligibility, including partner eligibility

Question 1: Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

Answer 1:

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.

Question 2: Would public schools (K-12) be considered an eligible entity under “local education agencies”?

Answer 2: Public schools can be an eligible entity if they meet the definition of local education agency in Section III.A. of the NOFO:

“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.”

Question 3: Our organization is considering applying for the Wildfire Smoke Preparedness grant, and I have a question. The organization that would be using the grant monies is a DBA of a parent organization. Should I enter the parent organization as the legal name on the application, or use the DBA (which would be the actual entity using the funds)?

Answer 3: If both the parent organization and the doing-business-as (DBA) name are an eligible entity for this grant program (see Section III (ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION) A. (Eligible Entities) of the NOFO), either name may be used in the application. Please note that the name used on the application must be registered in SAM.gov in order to apply via Grants.gov.

Question 4: Are local health jurisdictions eligible to apply, specifically Public Health departments?

Answer 4: This competition is open to States, federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies, and non-profit organizations. **Local health departments** are not eligible (see Section III.A. of the NOFO for definitions of eligible entities). Please note that local health departments could choose to partner with an organization that is eligible for this grant program and receive a subaward through the eligible entity (see Appendix A - Further information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs, and the Note on page 1 of the NOFO directing applicants to the current [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#), section IV.d. “Contracts and Subawards” for more information. Please note that Appendix A was inadvertently omitted from the NOFO when it was first published. A corrected version is now available on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347058>).

Question 5: Are these grants available to county governments for county smoke readiness programs?

Answer 5: This competition is open to States, federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies, and non-profit organizations. **County governments** are not eligible, though county agencies that fit the definition of one the listed entities could be eligible to apply (see Section III.A. of the NOFO for definitions

of eligible entities). Please note that county governments could choose to partner with an organization that is eligible for this grant program and receive a subaward through the eligible entity (see Appendix A - Further information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs, and the Note on page 1 of the NOFO directing applicants to the current [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#), section IV.d. “Contracts and Subawards” for more information. Please note that Appendix A was inadvertently omitted from the NOFO when it was first published. A corrected version is now available on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347058>).

Question 6: Are Tribal Health Programs or Tribal organizations, which are controlled and sanctioned by Tribal governments, eligible to apply, or would the Tribe need to be the original applicant?

Answer 6: Yes, Tribal Health Programs and Tribal organizations controlled and sanctioned by Tribal governments are eligible to apply as they meet the definition of either a Tribe or non-profit organization as described in Section III. A. of the NOFO.

Question 7: Would an application with multiple-Principal Investigators (PIs) where the Co-PI is a Tribal applicant but the prime-PI is not be considered a Tribal application?

Answer 7: No, this would not be considered a Tribal application. The primary applicant must be a Tribe to be considered a Tribal application.

Question 8: Would you consider fairgrounds eligible entities?

Answer 8: Fairgrounds may meet the definition of an eligible entity for this competition. This competition is open to States, federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Please note that entities not listed above can choose to partner with an organization that is eligible for this grant program and receive a subaward through the eligible entity (see Appendix A - Further information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs, and the Note on page 1 of the NOFO directing applicants to the current [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#), section IV.d. “Contracts and Subawards” for more information. Please note that Appendix A was inadvertently omitted from the NOFO when it was first published. A corrected version is now available on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347058>).

Question 9: Why weren't local health jurisdictions or local clean air authority agencies included in the list of eligible entities?

Answer 9: The list of eligible entities for this funding opportunity were defined by the 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 117-103, 136 Stat. 49) and the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 117-328) to include States, federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Question 10: As a community-based organization (CBO), we are in the process of owning the community building we are renting. Are we able to apply or do we need to apply in partnership with the current owner?

Answer 10: Ownership status of buildings will not be considered in the evaluation and award process. Eligible entities (which include States, federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies, and non-profit organizations) are able to apply. Applicants must target public buildings or buildings that serve the public. See Section I.B of the NOFO for additional information that should be provided about the buildings or communities served by proposed projects.

Question 11: Are units of local government (e.g. city, town, or county) eligible entities?

Answer 11: This competition is open to States, federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies, and non-profit organizations. Local governments are not eligible (see Section III.A. of the NOFO for definitions of eligible entities). Please note that local governments could choose to partner with an organization that is eligible for this grant program and receive a subaward through the eligible entity (see Appendix A - Further information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs, and the Note on page 1 of the NOFO directing applicants to the current [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#), section IV.d. "Contracts and Subawards" for more information. Please note that Appendix A was inadvertently omitted from the NOFO when it was first published. A corrected version is now available on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347058>).

Question 12: Does the applicant have to be the owner of buildings that will receive grant funding for project activities?

Answer 12: Ownership status of buildings will not be considered in the evaluation and award process. Eligible entities (which include States, federally recognized Tribes, public pre-schools, local educational agencies, and non-profit organizations) are able to apply. Applicants must target public buildings or buildings that serve the public. See Section I.B of the NOFO for additional information that should be provided about the buildings or communities served by proposed projects.

Question 13: Can someone outside the U.S. apply for this?

Answer 13: An international organization that meets the definition of one of the eligible entities as described in Section III.A. of the NOFO, such as an international non-profit, could apply for this grant. However, the applicant's proposed project would need to be based in a U.S. community.

Question 14: Are academic institutions (i.e., university researchers) covered under "local educational agencies"?

Answer 14: No, post-secondary academic institutions are not considered “local educational agencies” as defined in Section III.A. of the NOFO. In some cases, such institutions may be eligible to apply as a non-profit organization, also defined in Section III.A. of the NOFO. Additionally, academic institutions could choose to partner with an organization that is eligible for this grant program and receive a subaward through the eligible entity (see Appendix A - Further information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs, and the Note on page 1 of the NOFO directing applicants to the current [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#), section IV.d. “Contracts and Subawards” for more information. Please note that Appendix A was inadvertently omitted from the NOFO when it was first published. A corrected version is now available on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347058>).

Question 15: Can national laboratories be subrecipients?

Answer 15: If there is an entity, like a national laboratory, that is not directly eligible to apply for the grants they can partner with an organization that is eligible for this grant program and receive a subaward through the eligible entity (see Appendix A - Further information Regarding Contracts, Subawards, and Participant Support Costs, and the Note on page 1 of the NOFO directing applicants to the current [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#), section IV.d. “Contracts and Subawards” for more information. Please note that Appendix A was inadvertently omitted from the NOFO when it was first published. A corrected version is now available on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347058>).

Question 16: Is a State University an eligible institution?

Answer 16: A State university may be an eligible entity if the institution meets the definition of a non-profit organization as defined in Section III.A. of the NOFO.

Question 17: To clarify eligible institutions, am I reading the NOFO correctly that public/non-profit universities are eligible to apply?

Answer 17: Public or nonprofit universities may be eligible to apply if the institution meets the definition of a non-profit organization as defined in Section III.A. of the NOFO.

Question 18: Is there a conflict-of-interest restriction? Can a nonprofit apply when the parent company of the nonprofit is the HVAC/Air filtration/air quality monitoring provider?

Answer 18: There is no conflict-of-interest restriction to apply in this case as long as the applicant is an eligible entity, and the costs within the submitted budget are reasonable. Please note however that recipients must follow a competitive process when using EPA funds to purchase supplies, equipment and professional services in amounts that exceed their “micro-purchase” threshold. Micro-purchase amounts generally do not exceed \$10,000 (see 2 CFR 200.1). For purchases that cost more than the micro-purchase threshold but less than the simplified acquisition threshold described at 2 CFR 200.1 (currently set at \$250,000), recipients may use 2 CFR 200.320(a)(2) small purchase procedures and solicit offers from an adequate number of sources, taking

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) considerations into account, without formally advertising or otherwise publicizing the contracting opportunity. Procurements in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold are subject to the formal competitive requirements of 2 CFR 200.319 and 2 CFR 200.320(b). For more information, see the *Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements*: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/documents/best-practice-guide-for-procuring-services-supplies-equipment.pdf>

VII. Other

Question 1: What happens if an applicant proposes to work with a specific community in their grant application and is awarded a grant, but is later unable to work with that community due to unforeseen circumstances?

Answer 1: The grantee may need to relinquish the grant, depending on the impact to the project and any provisions of the grant such as cost sharing requirements. Grantees should contact their EPA Project Officer as soon as possible if this situation becomes apparent. For additional details, please see '[Remedies for Noncompliance](#)' under 2 CFR Part 200.

Question 2: I have a couple of questions regarding the Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings program.

First, page 1 of the attached program NOFO mentions an information session scheduled for April 10, however, no additional information is provided. Can you please advise where I can find additional information regarding the session, or if there is a link to register?

Also, page 1 mentions an optional intent to apply that is due April 21, 2023, however, no additional information is provided. Can you please advise the information that should be submitted with the intent to apply, as well as the submission instructions, such as whether it should be submitted via email, mail, or some other method, and the applicable address?

Answer 2: The intent to apply is optional. By Friday, April 21, please send a couple of brief sentences via email to IEDGrantsAdminTeam@epa.gov regarding your intent to apply, your organization, potential project and amount.

Question 3: I have a supplier who wants to provide air purifiers to communities. Can I please get a list of communities who are involved in this proposal?

Answer 3: The list of communities that may be served by this competition will not be determined until awards have been made. We are not able to provide a list of potential applicants for this grant program or communities that will be served by the program.

Question 4: Question regarding whether our campus housing facilities such as apartments and day care centers that serve students and families working at UCLA as a public university, qualify as "public buildings or buildings that serve the public" targeted by this funding opportunity.

Answer 4: Campus housing facilities such as apartments and day care centers may be considered public buildings or buildings that serve the public. It would be helpful to describe in the application when and how these facilities will be open to and/or serve the public, including information that characterizes the population served by the project as described in Evaluation Criterion 1.C. (see Section V.A. “Evaluation Criteria”).

Question 5: I am wondering if childcare centers count as a “public building or building that serves the public.” We WA DOH plan to apply (so we are the eligible entity), but want to work with childcare centers in the project activities.

Answer 5: Childcare centers may be considered a public building or building that serves the public. It would be helpful to describe in the application when and how the childcare centers participating in project activities will be open to and/or serve the public, including information that characterizes the population served by the project as described in Evaluation Criterion 1. C. (see Section V.A. “Evaluation Criteria”).

Question 6: Does “serving the public” mean that everyone has to be able to use the space?

Answer 6: No, the space does not need to be open the public at large during smoke events in order to be considered “serving the public,” unless the applicant chooses to propose such an arrangement. To help us understand the impact of the proposed project, it would be helpful to describe the population served by the childcare centers with which you plan to work (e.g., How many children/families attend the center? Is the center open to any family that applies, or only to a restricted group of families such as employees of one organization?) and how they are served (e.g., hours per week that children typically spend in the center, if additional children/families will be allowed to occupy the center during smoke events, etc.).

Question 7: Our nonprofit works with a variety of community facilities and already has an EPA grant. Can we have multiple open grants at the same time?

Answer 7: Yes, an applicant can have multiple grants open at the same time. If you are submitting an application for the same or virtually the same project, see the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#) for applicable information about duplicate funding.

Question 8: Can this grant, if funded, be pulled into a Performance Partnership Grant (PPG)?

Answer 8: No, awards under this program are not eligible to be included in a PPG.

Question 9: I would like to request a certificate of participation for this webinar.

Answer 9: EPA did not provide certificates of participation for the information session webinar on April 10, 2023.

Question 10: For this description you give of evaluation activities, do you have specific guidance on what would be a good method for evaluating ppm in the building to show air quality improvement? *“Describe a detailed approach to measure project effectiveness (... 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).”* Is there a testing procedure or measurement equipment type that you can recommend?

Answer 10: Specific guidance for activities measuring product effectiveness was not provided in the NOFO because of the wide variety of activities that may be proposed. Applicants should describe an approach that is appropriate for the activities in their application. 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 (see pg. 7 of the NOFO).