EPA Grants Competition Process Webinar, June 13, 2023
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1: Can one public school district be a lead applicant and include other school districts in their application?

A1: It depends on what is contained in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), but generally yes. If public school districts are an eligible entity, they can apply and include other school districts as partners in their application. If this question is related to a specific opportunity, please contact the Point of Contact in Section VII of the NOFO.

Q2: Can the EPA please define what a public-private partnership is? What is an example of a public-private partnership?

A2: The definition will depend on the funding opportunity. If the funding opportunity you are interested in does not adequately define this term, you can reach out to the point of contact listed in Section VII of the NOFO.

Q3: Is it possible to get Justice40 funding for a public park in an affluent area, neighboring a disadvantaged area?

A3: If you can demonstrate how the project will benefit the disadvantaged area, it is possible the park might be eligible for funding under Justice40; however, it will depend on the details listed in the NOFO.

Q4: Do you consider local Soil and Water Conservation Districts as County Governments?

A4: I believe it depends on the opportunity. If you have questions about your eligibility for a particular opportunity, reach out to the point of contact in Section VII of the NOFO.

Q5: Where do you go to sign up for automatic notifications for various grant opportunities?

A5: When you click on an opportunity, the main landing page for that opportunity should have two red buttons in the upper right corner. Click the one that says "subscribe".

Q6: Are EPA grant programs subject to Buy America?

A6: Some of EPA's programs are subject to Buy America provisions. If construction will be funded under the grant, Buy America will likely apply.

Q7: If I only signed up for partial access to SAM.gov, can I "upgrade" to the full registration?

A7: Yes, you should be able to take the initial SAM Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)-only registration and use it to apply for a full registration. There are various options you can select from, some of which are required in order to apply for federal government grants, including at EPA. For additional information, please review the Frequently Asked Questions: How to update/renew an existing entity registration in SAM.gov and Difference between signing up and registering in SAM.gov. You may also contact the Federal Service Desk (https://www.fsd.gov/) or visit How to Register to Apply for Grants for assistance with how to do this.

Q8:   How do we determine whether sub-awardees have exclusions if they are not "fully registered" on SAM?

A8:   SAM Exclusion Records contains the data for all active exclusion records entered by the federal government identifying those parties excluded from receiving federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and federal financial and non-financial assistance and benefits.

Q9:   How often do you have to register for SAM.gov? Once and done?

A9:   You only have to register once, but you do have to renew the registration annually. I recommend setting a reminder in your calendar to renew so the registration doesn't lapse. You can find more information here: GSA Federal Service Desk Service Portal.

Q10:   Is an awarded application an implicit approval by EPA to proceed with actions that require approval?

A10:   If the activities that you would need preapproval for are contained in the approved workplan associated with the executed award document, that is considered approval. However, any activities not covered under the workplan that require preapproval would need separate approval.

Q11:   As a state entity, we have a Buy Priority where we have approved vendors using our state procurement code. Could we use those vendors and add federal terms in a resulting agreement? Or do we have to re-solicit with the EPA required solicitation terms?

A11:   States follow their own procurement procedures. See 2 CFR 317 (https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d/section-200.317).

Q12:   The Pesticide Registration Improvement Act's (PRIA 5) new language won't be funding universities. Can a non-profit that is applying for funding still partner with universities?

A12:   It will depend on the statute language if you can partner with a nonprofit or other eligible entity. Most of the time you can receive subaward funding under a grant program that you were not eligible to receive the funding for as a prime. If you have additional questions, the PRIA 5 contact is listed here: https://www.epa.gov/pria-fees.

Q13:   Do we need an EPA account to utilize your services?

A13:   You do not need any kind of EPA account to apply for or receive grant funding. You do need a SAM.gov registration which is a federal government-wide registration system. Registering for SAM.gov works for all federal agencies and is the system whereby you can receive federal funding, either in the form of a grant or a contract. You will also need to set up a Grants.gov account and register to submit applications for federal grants. Detailed instructions are available here: https://www.epa.gov/grants/how-register-apply-grants.

Q14:   Are non-profits allowed to apply for multiple grants during the same cycle if they are eligible?

A14:   Different grant programs have different rules on how many projects you can submit under the same grant program or the same competition. Information on this will be listed clearly in Section III of the NOFO, which is the eligibility section. You should look

under threshold eligibility requirements. If you are still unclear, please reach out to the point of contact in Section VII of the same NOFO.

Q15:   In terms of the 15-day window to schedule a debriefing, does this timeframe vary for each federal agency?

A15:   Yes. EPA has its own dispute procedures that we put in place as part of the EPA Competition Order. Other agencies may have different timeframes depending on their particular procedures.

Q16:   Are 501(c)6 non-profits generally eligible for EPA funding?

A16:   It depends on the grant program. Applicants should review the eligibility section in the NOFO. If they are uncertain of their eligibility, they should contact the Point of Contact listed in Section VII of the NOFO. A nonprofit that is tax exempt under 501(c)(6) is generally eligible for EPA grants similar to other nonprofit organizations.

Q17:   As a state entity, if we subaward to another state entity, would the terms also apply to the state subawardee?

A17:   Many of EPA's grant Terms and Conditions apply to the subawardee. States follow their own regulations which would still be the case if you were a state that was a subawardee.

Q18:   Do you have a formula for calculating cost share as a percent of a project?

A18:   The cost share formula is dependent on the grant program. Some grant programs have statutory or regulatory match requirements and sometimes the cost share is a percentage of the total project cost, which includes both federal and nonfederal, and sometimes it's a percentage of just the federal amount. Typically, the NOFO will tell you explicitly how to calculate cost share. If a program is allowing for voluntary matching, then it will not have a specific formula for calculating cost share.

Q19:   Can a Technical Assistance Provider have a SAM.gov login/password to apply for a grant for a town?

A19:   You will not apply for a grant through SAM.gov. SAM.gov is where you must register to do business with the federal government. You will apply for grants through Grants.gov and it is possible to have someone from an outside organization apply on your behalf. You must ensure that they are applying under the correct UEI.

Q20:   Are designated Environmental Justice (EJ) areas a priority?

A20:   EJ is a priority for EPA. We have several ongoing initiatives to better incorporate and address environmental justice concerns and areas in our grant programs. Please find more information here: https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice