

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

Funding Opportunity Title: Training for Improved Protection of Drinking Water Sources

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-02

Assistance Listing Number: 66.424

Dates: Application packages must be submitted electronically to the EPA through Grants.gov ([Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)) no later than **June 10, 2024, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time, to be considered for funding.** Questions about this funding opportunity must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the agency contact identified in Section VII before **May 16, 2024.** Written responses will be posted on the EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/uic/underground-injection-control-grants>.

Note to Applicants: Following the EPA's evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your application to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. The EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners, co-applicants, or members of a coalition or consortium. The award recipient is accountable to the EPA for the proper expenditure of funds and adherence to the competition requirements.

CONTENTS BY SECTION

- I. Funding Opportunity Description
- II. Award Information
- III. Eligibility Information
- IV. Application and Submission Information
- V. Application Review Information
- VI. Award Administration Information
- VII. Agency Contact

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background

The EPA, together with states, Tribes, and its many partners, protects public health by protecting current and future drinking water sources and ensuring the availability of high-quality drinking water. Two programs within the EPA that protect drinking water sources are the Underground Injection Control and Source Water Protection programs.¹

¹ Throughout this funding announcement, reference is made to state UIC and SWP programs. It is assumed to also include Tribes and territories.

The EPA's Underground Injection Control (UIC) program protects current and future underground sources of drinking water (USDWs) from endangerment by setting minimum requirements for siting, construction, operation, and closure of injection wells that emplace fluids underground for storage or disposal. The purpose of the UIC requirements is to protect USDWs by ensuring that injected fluids do not endanger sources of drinking water or otherwise adversely affect public health. Injection wells are directly regulated by either a state or Tribal agency, or the EPA. The UIC program also provides information for owners and operators of injection wells and state regulators on how to safely operate injection wells to prevent contamination of underground sources of drinking water.

The EPA's Source Water Protection (SWP) program promotes tools and strategies that can be used to help improve and protect drinking water sources. The SWP program encourages partnerships among state and Tribal agencies, local governments, utilities, non-governmental organizations, and citizen groups to carry out the source water protection actions.

The EPA works with states and Tribes to implement the UIC and SWP programs. The goal of this funding announcement is to improve the capacity of states and Tribes working with the EPA to protect drinking water sources and public health. Grantees may also work with municipalities on Source Water Protection. States and Tribes administer their UIC programs as "co-regulators" with the EPA. Therefore, the training should enhance communication and coordination between the EPA and the states/Tribes with primary enforcement responsibility (primacy) to protect drinking water sources. The training should also help ensure that state and Tribal interests are effectively represented in the development of national UIC policies and programs that states and Tribes administer.

Forty-three states and two Tribes have EPA-approved primacy programs for one or more well classes. The EPA directly implements all well classes in seven states, two territories, the District of Columbia, and all other Indian Tribes (<https://www.epa.gov/uic/primary-enforcement-authority-underground-injection-control-program-0>).

The SWP program helps improve and protect the quality of sources of drinking water, including sources of drinking water for drinking water utilities and private wells. Sources of drinking water include groundwater, streams, rivers, springs, lakes, and reservoirs. Protecting these sources of water is an important part of providing safe drinking water to the public. SWP requires the combined efforts of many partners at the federal, state, and local levels. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Amendments of 1996 required states to develop and implement source water assessment programs to analyze existing and potential threats to the quality of the public drinking water throughout the state. In addition, the American Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018 amends SDWA to expand source water protection-related eligibilities for the Local Assistance and Other State Programs Set-Aside under the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (Section 1452(k)). This expansion allows states to use this set-aside to update source water assessments and expenditures under Section 1452(k)(1)(D) may now go beyond wellhead protection programs to include the implementation of source water protection program activities (see memo: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-07/documents/expanded_source_water_protection-related_eligibilities_under_dwsrfs_local_assistance_and_other_state_programs_set-aside_memo_7-26-19_0.pdf).

This expanded eligibility illustrates Congress' recognition of the important role source water protection plays in public health protection and a water system's capacity to deliver safe and reliable

drinking water. The SWP program is primarily implemented on a voluntary basis through partnership activities, as there is no federal mandate requiring state and local governments to maintain SWP programs. While the EPA and other federal, state, and local organizations have made considerable strides through a broad range of efforts, much work remains to be done. Substantial opportunities remain for leveraging the EPA's programs and partnerships with external organizations to comprehensively protect drinking water sources.

For more information on the EPA's UIC program, please go to: <http://www.epa.gov/uic>. For more information on the EPA's SWP program, please go to: <http://www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection>.

B. Project Description

The EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to provide training to develop and expand the capability of state and Tribal UIC and SWP programs. In their applications, applicants should describe their proposed approach to providing training that will achieve these objectives. The project elements described below provide detail on roles and responsibilities that are important to improving the capability of states and Tribes to protect drinking water sources and public health. The description below is not comprehensive. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional project elements in their applications that may not be included in this funding opportunity that may contribute to overall project success.

1. Provide leadership and support to states and tribes on emerging and/or high priority issues.

The successful applicant will provide leadership and support to states and Tribes by assisting state and Tribal officials who are responsible for implementing state and Tribal UIC and SWP programs in identifying UIC and source water protection issues, prioritizing those issues, and developing strategies to address those issues. The successful applicant will monitor, coordinate, represent, and advance environmental interests.

The successful applicant will identify one or two emerging and/or high priority issues for each of the UIC and SWP programs per year for each year of the three-year project period. The emerging and/or high priority issues should reflect input from state and Tribal agencies involved in implementation of the UIC and SWP programs to inform national policy. Examples of emerging and/or high priority issues for the UIC program include, but are not limited to, the items listed below.

- Advancing environmental justice and community engagement as it relates to the management of all well classes.
- Class II disposal wells and induced seismicity.
- Class V wells such as aquifer storage and recovery wells.
- Class VI well primacy and program revisions.
- UIC Data Application utilization.
- Identification of challenges and tools to protect and promote protection of sources of drinking water.

Examples of SWP program emerging and/or high priority issues include, but are not limited to, the items listed below.

- Source water assessment updates
- Source water protection plans
- Source water quality monitoring plans
- Coordination with Clean Water Act (CWA) Programs such as nonpoint source and water

- quality standards
- Quantifying the impact of source water protection efforts on economic and human health endpoints
- Coordination with funding programs such as the DWSRF, CWSRF, Section 319, FEMA, and others
- Leveraging the BIL investments to provide SWP benefits
- Engaging local communities in source water efforts, with a focus on economically challenged communities
- Leveraging the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities grant program to provide SWP benefits
- Tracking and reporting progress towards strategic targets
- Nutrient pollution and harmful algal blooms
- Emerging contaminants such as PFAS
- Environmental Justice
- Climate Change
- Local collaboration and partnership advancement between utilities and SWP efforts, including through source water collaboratives

The successful applicant will convene and facilitate discussions and workgroups that will encourage state and tribal participation in recommending strategies to address emerging and/or high priority UIC and SWP program issues. Discussions of these issues should include identifying the best management practices from among state and Tribal agency officials, as well as policy and technical options, implementation approaches and impacts, and strategies for solutions in the context of the federal/state/Tribal UIC and the SWP programs. The successful applicant will be able to contribute expertise on the emerging and/or high priority UIC and SWP program issues. The successful applicant will develop products that states and Tribes can utilize and benefit from, such as an issue analysis and synthesis of best management policies and implementation approaches other states and Tribes have successfully used to address the issue.

The successful applicant will identify and invite appropriate participants for discussions and workgroups, including stakeholders and relevant experts. The primary participants of the discussions and workgroups will be state and Tribal agency representatives involved in implementation of drinking water protection programs (e.g., UIC and SWP programs) as well as federal and non-federal stakeholders. Federal stakeholders may participate but will constitute a small percentage of each discussion group and workgroup.

Activities may include preparing agendas, facilitating conference calls and meetings, summarizing discussion of action items, and providing expertise on emerging and/or high priority issues. A portion of the assistance funds may be used by the successful applicant to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend discussions/workgroups. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the discussions/workgroups. The EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

2. Sponsor annual meetings for UIC and SWP programs.

The successful applicant will sponsor (or co-sponsor) an annual UIC meeting and an annual SWP

meeting for state and Tribal agency officials engaged in implementing protection of drinking water (including UIC and SWP programs). For planning purposes, the expectation is that the annual meetings should be at least one day. The agenda for the annual meeting should be informed by a planning committee of state and Tribal agency officials and source water protection stakeholders. Meetings should supply ample opportunities for interaction between the EPA and state and Tribal co-regulators. Opportunities for state and Tribal co-regulator only sessions facilitated by the successful applicant, especially in situations where premature disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause misinterpretations or violate privacy interests, should be included. Applicants should, to the extent practicable, identify specific anticipated meetings in their application and indicate the expected target audience, include a plan for meeting-related outreach, and consider the benefit of a face-to-face meeting.

The meetings should be held in locations that will allow for broad attendance of state and Tribal co-regulators and other stakeholders as well as provide geographic diversity during the three-year project period. The applicant may choose to combine the annual meetings for UIC and source water protection issues, and/or combine them with other meetings, provided that the applicant can demonstrate that the appropriate audiences will still be served by doing so and that both UIC and SWP topics are thoroughly covered. The applicant should consider ways to reduce the carbon footprint of the annual meetings, and consider whether off-site participation through, for example, the use of webinar and video technology is appropriate.

A portion of the assistance funds may be used by the successful applicant to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal meeting attendees. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the annual meetings. The EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

3. Develop and deliver training for UIC Class VI regulators

The successful applicant will develop and deliver a (virtual and/or in person) training workshop or training series for regulators who review UIC Class VI well permit applications and issue Class VI permits. Class VI wells are used for the long-term storage of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in deep subsurface formations. This training will be of particular use to states and Tribes that have primary enforcement authority (primacy) for Class VI wells or have expressed interest in obtaining Class VI primacy. The target audience for this training is state and Tribal UIC regulators. Federal UIC regulators may also benefit from this training; however, federal staff will not be the primary audience.

Topics for this training may include, but are not limited to:

- Background on carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) and the UIC Program and applicable authorities
- Reference materials for Class VI permit writers
- The unique properties of CO₂, including CO₂ water-rock interactions
- Geologic site characterization
- Multiphase fluid flow modeling, including how to evaluate an applicant's modeling results
- Evaluation of Class VI site-specific risk analysis
- Evaluation of Class VI monitoring plans
- Evaluation of pre-injection testing and characterization during Class VI well construction
- Evaluation of Class VI corrective action plans

- Evaluation of post-injection site care and site closure plans for Class VI wells
- Financial assurance (for the lifetime of a Class VI project)

The successful applicant will:

- Outline the steps that they will take to prepare, plan, and conduct the training (this will include the proposed format of the training, e.g., number of training events planned over the three year project period, anticipated duration of the training(s));
- Establish a plan for consulting with states, Tribes, and other stakeholders throughout the training process to determine the audience's needs (e.g., communication with state organizations);
- Convey technical information related to UIC Class VI permitting to state and Tribal UIC regulators, including new and experienced staff; and
- Describe how they will communicate the results of the training with states, Tribes, and other stakeholders (e.g., communication with state organizations, recording the training for later distribution)

4. Support and encourage state and Tribal participation in the UIC Data Application.

The UIC program collects and maintains a national dataset on injection wells and regulatory activities conducted by the federal, state, and Tribal UIC programs. The data is used to increase public knowledge about the program's protection of underground sources of drinking water and the effectiveness, management, and oversight of the National UIC program. Until 2018, the EPA collected the data through three mechanisms: the hardcopy Form 7520-1 through 7520-4, the electronic Inventory and Measures Reporting Site (IMRS), and the National UIC Database. In 2018, the EPA modernized the data process with the UIC Data Application, a web-based application that collects and utilizes data. The successful applicant will facilitate discussions with state and Tribal UIC programs to identify programs that may need technical assistance with submitting program information in the UIC Data Application.

Activities may include, but are not limited to: supporting the primacy program as it adapts its data management systems to easily export data in the correct fields and formats, providing information to primacy programs about upcoming trainings and available user resources, providing opportunities for primacy programs to interact with the EPA regarding the UIC Data Application, and encouraging the use of existing data to promote data-driven public outreach and programmatic decision-making.

5. Disseminate and share information with states, Tribes, and other stakeholders.

The successful applicant will stay abreast of relevant and timely issues and share this information with states, Tribes, and other stakeholders. It is anticipated that information sharing (such as the items identified under Source Water high priority areas) may be accomplished by establishing multiple means of communication with and among states, Tribes, and other stakeholders including, for example, face-to-face meetings, a dedicated website, e-mail contact lists, conference calls, and video conferences. Opportunities for collaborating with other organizations and meetings should be employed to the maximum extent possible (e.g., the Source Water Collaborative, additional information is available at www.sourcewatercollaborative.org/). Types of information that may be of interest to the target audience of states, Tribes, and other non-federal stakeholders include, but are not limited to, relevant technical and policy papers, UIC e-learning training modules, court decisions, and

drafts/proposals of new federal or state policies/regulation that may have drinking water protection resource consequences for state UIC or SWP programs.

6. Additional project elements. Describe any additional elements or tasks that are proposed as key features of the project and how they will be implemented.

Applications will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V. The EPA anticipates funding one award for approximately \$2,100,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for this award will be three years and that the award will be incrementally funded at approximately \$700,000 per year.

C. EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results

Applicants must demonstrate in their application how their project and proposed activities link to the Strategic Plan Goal and Objective identified below.

The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the [FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#). Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 5, Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities, Objective 5.1: Ensure Safe Drinking Water and Reliable Water Infrastructure.

All proposed activities must demonstrate the linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project as well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall protection of ground and surface water sources of drinking water. Additional information regarding the EPA's Strategic Plan and discussion of environmental results can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>.

Outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated outputs from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to, the items listed below.

- Identification of one or two emerging and/or high priority issues for both UIC and SWP programs on an annual basis.
- Organization and facilitation of discussions and/or workgroups to identify best practices, develop products that analyze or synthesize those practices, and develop policy and technical options, related to the priority issues identified above.
- Preparation of annual meetings for both the UIC and SWP programs for state and Tribal co-regulator agency officials and other stakeholders engaged in implementing protection of drinking water sources.
- Expansion of state and Tribal participation in the federal/state UIC Data Application.
- Development and promotion of communication tools and/or events such as webinars, websites, and conference calls for both UIC and SWP programs.
- Development and delivery of Class VI training for regulators (i.e., workshop(s) or training series)

Outcomes are 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 are used to gauge a project's performance. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature. Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to, the items listed below.

- Increased awareness and knowledge of practices that promote protection of drinking water sources and the resulting benefits to public health protection efforts.
- Improved capacity of states and Tribes with primacy to implement UIC programs.
- Improved ability to identify well types, locations, and types of fluids being injected nationwide.
- Enhanced exchange of information regarding best practices and improved capacity of state and Tribal agencies to strengthen SWP programs.
- Enhanced state and Tribal knowledge of the UIC Class VI program and technical considerations for Class VI permitting.

As part of the Project Narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the agency's Strategic Plan. In addition, applicants will have to describe their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving expected outputs and outcomes. Additional information regarding the EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>.

D. 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.

E. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for this announcement is Section 1442(c)(3) of the SDWA. This section of the SDWA authorizes the EPA to make grants to eligible entities for training of personnel of states and Tribes that have primary enforcement responsibility or personnel who manage or operate public water systems to carry out the purposes of SDWA (other than by carrying out state programs of public water system supervision or underground water source protection (as defined in SDWA 1443(c))).

II. Award Information

A. Amount of Funding

The total amount of funding expected to be available under this announcement is approximately \$2,100,000, depending on the agency's funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that one award will be made under this announcement. It is anticipated that the award will be incrementally funded at approximately \$700,000 per year and will have a three-year project period.

In appropriate circumstances, the EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If the 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, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

The EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement. In addition, the EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, 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 six months after the original selection decisions.

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

B. Type of Funding

The EPA intends to award one cooperative agreement under this solicitation. Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant(s) in the performance of the work supported. Although the EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (the EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

The 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 Applicants

Consistent with Assistance Listing Number 66.424, eligible applicants under this solicitation are states, local governments, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public and private nonprofit institutions.² Individuals are not eligible to apply. For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in prohibited lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirements

No cost share or match is required.

C. Threshold Eligibility

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A, and C to be considered eligible. Only applications that meet all these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration because of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement at the time of application submission.
2. Applications must **substantially comply** with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this solicitation or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the 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.
3. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this solicitation (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 of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through

² 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. 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.

Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to the EPA prior to the deadline.

4. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to the EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with Grants.gov or SAM.gov. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission outside of Grants.gov.

5. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

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 C. *Technical Issues with Submission* below.

B. Submission Instructions

1. 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.

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.

2. [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.

3. [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.

4. Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) no later than **June 10, 2024 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**. 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.

C. 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:

1. Contact Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
2. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
3. Send an email with "EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-02" in the subject line to UIC-Sourcewater-RFA@epa.gov **before** the application deadline time and date. The application **must** include the following:
 - a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
 - b. Description of the issue
 - c. The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, the 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.

The EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. The EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) 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.

D. Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).
- Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A).
- EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54.
- EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report.
- Project Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form) prepared as described in Section IV.E.1.e.

Optional Documents:

- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable (Use Other Attachments Form).
- Biographical Sketches (Use Other Attachments Form).
- Letters of Support (Use Other Attachments Form).
- Full Resumes (Use Other Attachments Form).

E. Content of Application Package Submission

Applicants should read the following section very carefully. A complete application package must include the following documents described below.

1. Application Materials

a. Signed Standard Form 424 (SF-424), Application for Federal Assistance. Complete the form and have it signed. There are no attachments.

b. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A), Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.

Complete the form. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the total indirect amount should also be indicated on line 22. In Section B, Budget Categories row 1, column (e) should be filled out for federal funds, row 1 column (f) should be filled out for any non-federal cost-share/match, and row 5 should be filled out for total project cost (combined federal funds and any non-federal cost-share/match).

c. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54. Complete the form. Attach additional forms as needed.

d. EPA Form 4700–4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report. Complete the form. There are no attachments.

e. Project Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form). See Section IV.E.2 (Project Narrative) for details on specific information that must be included. When developing the Project Narrative, applicants should refer to Section I.B of the announcement which provides the description and objectives for the project.

f. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

See [Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for additional information about indirect cost rates. The Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is not included in the seventeen (17) page single-spaced Project Narrative page limit.

g. Biographical Sketches. Submit a biographical sketch of each major project manager, support staff member, or other major project participant for the proposed project. Biographical sketches are not included in the Project Narrative page limit. (see Section IV.C.2.C.4.b).

h. Letters of Support. Applicants may provide up to 15 letters of support from potential recipients of technical assistance to demonstrate that the applicant's proposed approach is responsive to the potential recipients' needs. Letters of support are not included in the Project Narrative page limit.

i. Full Resumes. Full resumes may be submitted and are not included in the Project Narrative page limit (see Section IV.E.2.c.4.b).

2. Project Narrative

NOTE: The Project Narrative must include sections A-C below. The Project Narrative, (covering sections A-C below) is limited to no more than seventeen (17) typewritten, single-spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal. **Additional pages beyond the 17-page single-spaced limit will not be considered.** The Project Narrative will be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 17-page single-spaced limit; excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials, such as biographical sketches, letters of support, and full resumes as described below, are not included within the page limit.

The application's Project Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the Project Narrative.

a. Cover Page including:

- a. Name of applicant;
- b. Project title;
- c. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number); and
- d. Total project cost: specify the amount of federal funds requested and the total project cost.

b. Executive Summary: Provide a brief summary (should not exceed one page) of the proposed project. This should include a brief description of the proposed project and the anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes.

c. Work Plan: The work plan must address the following elements:

(1) Technical Approach: Describe the approach to provide training to enhance communication and coordination between the EPA and the states and Tribes with primacy to protect surface and ground water sources of drinking water by developing and expanding the capability of state and Tribal UIC and SWP programs. The technical approach should include a description of the strategy for accomplishing the project elements listed, and any additional project elements to the extent applicable, in Section I.B. Project Description.

(2) Environmental Results and Measuring Progress:

(a) Stated Objective/Link to the EPA Strategic Plan - List the objective of the project and the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan. The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 5, Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities, Objective 5.1: Ensure Safe Drinking Water and Reliable Water Infrastructure., (see Section I.C of this announcement).

(b) Results of Activities (Outputs) - Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project activities, and describe an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement).

(c) Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - Describe the environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of the project activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result of the accomplishment of the work plan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement).

(3) Milestone Schedule: Provide a detailed projected timeline for the proposed project period. The timeline should cover each year of the project period and provide a breakout of the project activities in phases with associated tasks, a timeframe for completion of tasks, and an approach for ensuring that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant.

(4) Programmatic Capability/Specialized Experience:

(a) Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of your organization and experience related to the proposed project, and your organization's infrastructure as it relates to your ability to successfully implement the proposed project.

(b) Staff Expertise/Qualifications - Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and describe your resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Key staff include major project managers, support staff members, or other major project participants. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2,080 hours per year/FTE). Biographical sketches of applicant's key staff are also encouraged and are not included in the page limit for the Project Narrative. Full resumes may be included and are not counted in the page limit for the Project Narrative.

(c) Specialized Experience - Describe prior experiences with interacting with state and Tribal agencies responsible for environmental programs, particularly in relation to programs responsible for protecting ground water. Include a description of experience: (1) working on human health and environmental issues related to ground water protection issues, source water protection issues, and/or UIC issues; (2) working with senior managers in state and Tribal governments responsible for protecting ground water (i.e., implementation of UIC programs and SWP programs); and (3) demonstrated ability in engaging with experts in UIC program implementation and source water protection implementation.

(5) Detailed Budget Narrative: Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task. This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF-424A such as "other" and "contractual."

Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF-424A such as “other” and “contractual.” Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs and total cost. All sub-grant funding should be located in the “other” cost category. Participant support costs are captured in the “other” cost category and may include, for example, training fees or travel assistance for non-federal conference, training, or workshop participants. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for the EPA to determine the allowability of costs for each project component/task, as well as the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs (both federal and any non-federally funded components). If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel of applicant employees. There is general guidance available to applicants when preparing proposed budgets which can be found on the agency’s [General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#) webpage and [training on how to develop a budget](#).

(6) Past Performance: Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and:

- (a) Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
- (b) Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
- (c) Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

Note: In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, the 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 and prior federal agency 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 reporting information, you must indicate this in the application in order to receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. Failure to provide any past performance or reporting information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see also Section V).**

Note: The applicant should also provide in the Project Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already addressed above, that addresses the selection criteria in Section V.

E. Submission Dates and Times

Applications submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](#) must be received by **June 10, 2024 at 11:59 PM Eastern Time**. Late applications will not be considered for funding.

V. Application Review Information

A. Selection Criteria

All eligible applications, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights listed below (100 total point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the application package.

25 points total	Criterion 1: Technical Approach Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the application proposes an approach to address the training project elements, and any additional project elements as applicable, described in Section I.B. Project Description. <i>(25 points)</i>
10 points total	Criterion 2: Milestone Schedule and Detailed Budget Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the application addresses each of the following sub-criterion: a) A detailed milestone schedule for the proposed project period including a clearly articulated milestone schedule, including timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks, and an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. <i>(5 points)</i> b) Reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget narrative and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. <i>(5 points)</i>
20 points total	Criterion 3: Environmental Results and Measuring Progress Applications will be evaluated based on each of the following sub-criterion: a) Environmental Results: The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates the ability to identify and articulate anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes from the project, as described in Section IV of the announcement, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. <i>(10 points)</i> b) Measuring Progress: The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outcomes and outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). <i>(10 points)</i>

25 points total	<p>Criterion 4: Programmatic Capability/Specialized Experience</p> <p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Technical expertise and/or experience working on human health and environmental issues related to ground water protection issues, source water protection issues, and UIC issues. (8 points)b) Experience working with senior managers in state and Tribal governments responsible for protecting drinking water (i.e., implementation of UIC programs and SWP programs); and demonstrated ability in engaging with experts in UIC program implementation and source water protection implementation. (8 points)c) Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their infrastructure as it relates to the ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (4 points)d) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (5 points)
------------------------	---

<p>20 points total</p>	<p>Criterion 5: Past Performance</p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, taking into account their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). <i>(7 points)</i> b) History of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. <i>(7 points)</i> c) Extent and quality to which the applicant adequately documented and/or reported on its progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. <i>(6 points)</i> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under (a), (b), and (c) above, the 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). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history must indicate that in the application and will receive a neutral score for the factor (i.e., 3.5 points for item (a), 3.5 points for item (b), and 3 points for item (c)). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your application that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factor (i.e., zero points for item (a), zero points for item (b), and zero points for item (c)).</p>
-------------------------------	--

B. Review and Selection Process

All timely submitted applications will be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Applications that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel comprised of EPA staff will review the eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and will develop a ranking list of the applications based on the scores received. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the application score and may take into account other factors such as programmatic priorities.

VI. Award Administration Information

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

A. Award Notices

Following the EPA's evaluation of the applications, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance or the project contact listed in the application. The 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 EPA's Grants Management and Business Operations Division.

Only an Award Official 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 the EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA Award Official, 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., workplan), which must be approved by the EPA, before the cooperative agreement can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a cooperative agreement can take up to 90 days or longer.

The EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final cooperative agreement amount and workplan narrative prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with agency policy including the [EPA Order 5700.5A1 Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements](#). An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Components to be funded under the cooperative agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each component;
3. Commitments for each component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA in carrying out the commitments.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The general award and administration process for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 2 CFR 200 and 1500, as applicable. A description of the agency's substantial involvement in the cooperative agreement will be included in the final assistance agreement.

C. Reporting

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 120 days after the cooperative agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating the cooperative agreement(s), the EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the work plan consistent with 2 CFR 200 and 1500, and 40 CFR Part 45, as appropriate.

D. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at [Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures](#). Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement. Note, the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

E. Data Sharing

All recipients of these assistance agreements may be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final work plan.

VII. Agency Contact

Note to Applicants: In accordance with [EPA Order 5700.5A1 Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements](#), the EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants or discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, the EPA will respond to written questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in Section VII as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting a proposal. In addition, if necessary, the EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination. Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below before 30 day after posting. Written responses will be posted on the EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/uic/underground-injection-control-grants>.

Agency Contact:

Sherri Comerford

E-mail: UIC-Sourcewater-RFA@epa.gov