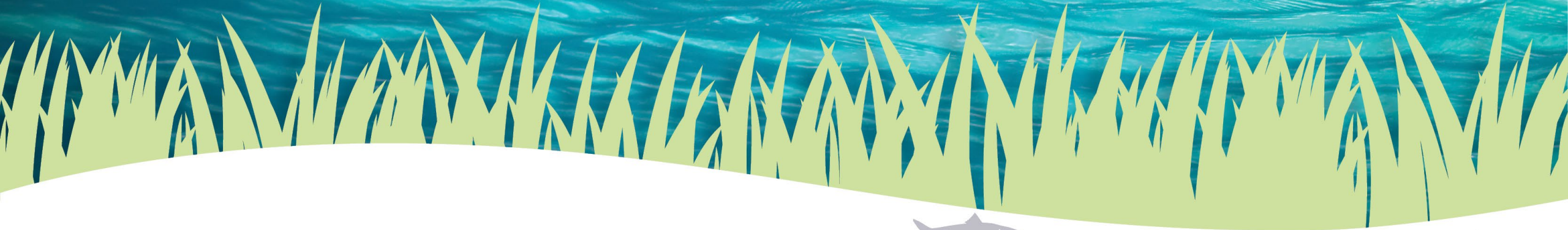


# SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience (SNEP-SOAR)

## Informational Webinar



U.S. EPA, Southeast New England Program



April 16, 2024, 11:00AM -1:00PM (EDT)





- Please mute/video off during presentation
- This meeting is being recorded
- Slides/recording will be posted to SNEP webpage
- Questions will be addressed at the end of the presentation
- Questions and answers will be posted on SNEP webpage

# Acronyms



Acronym	Meaning
SNEP	Southeast New England Program
SNEP-SOAR Fund	SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience Fund
CEJST	Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
RFP	Request for Proposals

# Funding Opportunity Information



- CFDA: 66.129
- RFP Link: <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/352728>
- Opportunity #: EPA-I-R1-SNEP-2024A

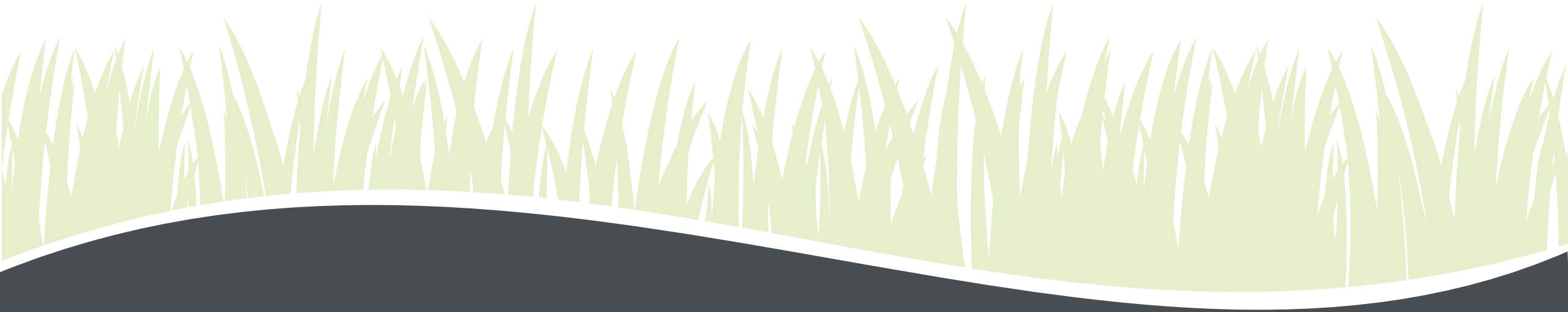
# Agenda



- SNEP Background
- SOAR Overview
- Funding Overview
- RFP Review Criteria
- Build America, Buy America Act
- Question & Answer Period



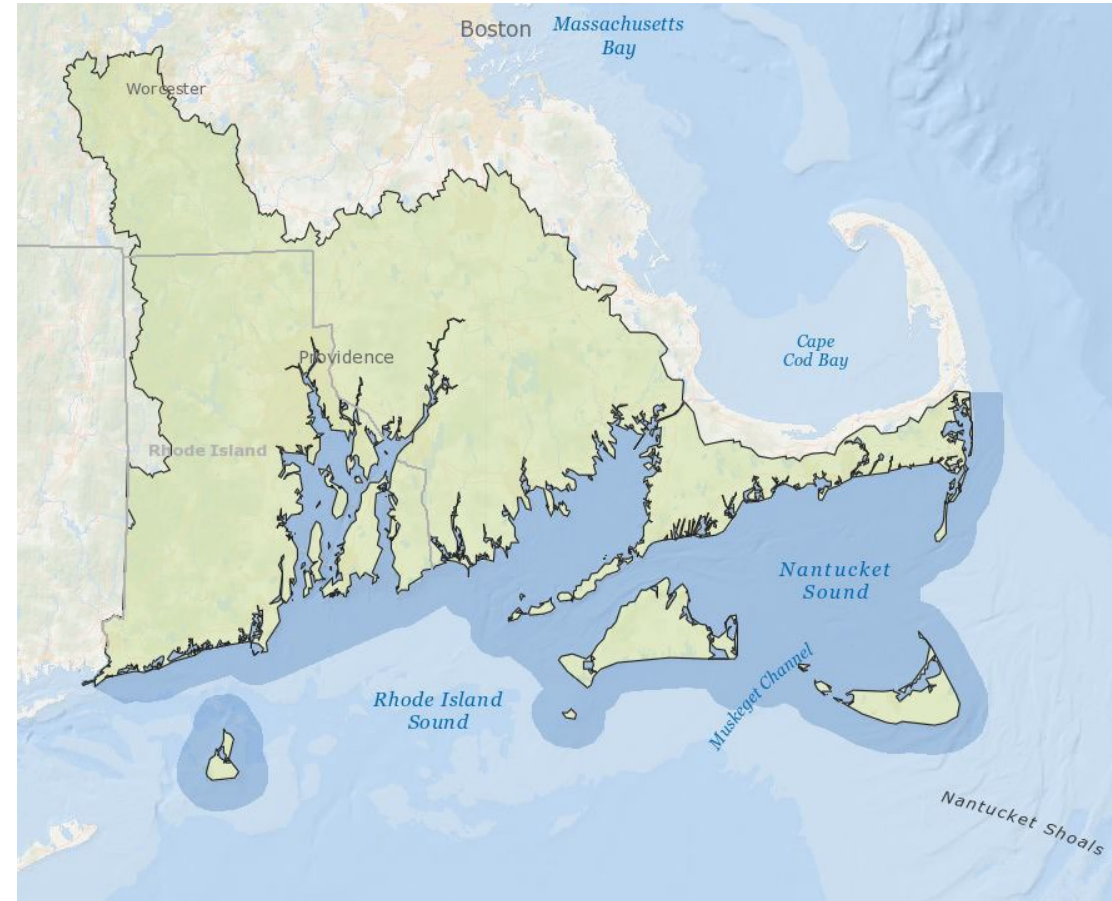
# SNEP Background and SOAR Overview



# SNEP Background



- Southeast New England Program
- EPA Led (Region 1)
- Established in 2012, funded since 2014
- Rhode Island and S.E Massachusetts
- Foci:
  - Water Quality/Habitat
  - Climate Resilience
  - Innovation
  - Collaboration
  - Transferability
  - Holistic Approaches
  - Environmental Justice





## Program Vision 2050

A resilient ecosystem of safe and healthy waters, thriving watersheds and natural lands, and sustainable communities in the SNEP coastal watershed region

### Resilient Ecosystem of Safe and Healthy Waters

- Waters support native seagrasses and aquatic life, plentiful native fish and shellfish, and a variety of water-based recreation opportunities

### Thriving Watersheds and Natural Lands

- Watersheds provide essential ecological functions, species diversity, and protection from both human-based and naturally occurring environmental stressors, and healthy, connected natural lands support a variety and range of native plant and wildlife communities

### Sustainable Communities

- Communities share robust water-based economics, protect and provide access to natural lands, open spaces and parks, encourage local food sources, and are adapting for resilience to expected impacts of climate change



# Goals and Key Actions



**Increase Local Capacity to Complete Projects and Adopt New Policies**

**Increase Available Solutions**

**Ensure Diverse Representation in Program Decision-Making**

**Demonstrate Ways to Address Common Challenges**

**Increase Community Leaders' Understanding of the Benefits of Restoration Projects**

# SOAR Overview



- SNEP Justice40 goal commits 40% of BIL funds to disadvantaged communities
- SOAR is designed to meet majority of this goal by 2027 by allocating \$1.25M/year for four years
- SOAR seeks the following project types: Planning, Implementation, Outreach, Training, and Capacity Building/Staffing
  - Examples of these project types are included in the RFP.



# SOAR Overview



- Awards can be designed to be multi-year; but are fully awarded at the outset.
- Eligible projects must be in SNEP DAC areas with priority given to CEJST communities.
- SNEP aims to award \$1.25M/year.  
Two award categories:
  - Three awards ~\$300k
  - Remaining awards ~\$50k



# SOAR Overview



## CEJST and New-Applicant Set Asides

- 40% of awards to New Applicants (entities who have not received EPA funding in the past 5 years)
- 70% of awards located in or directly benefiting CEJST Communities
- New Applicant submissions will be graded separately from repeat applicant submissions

EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and amount of awards under each set-aside or change the ratio of assistance agreements it awards among the set-asides.



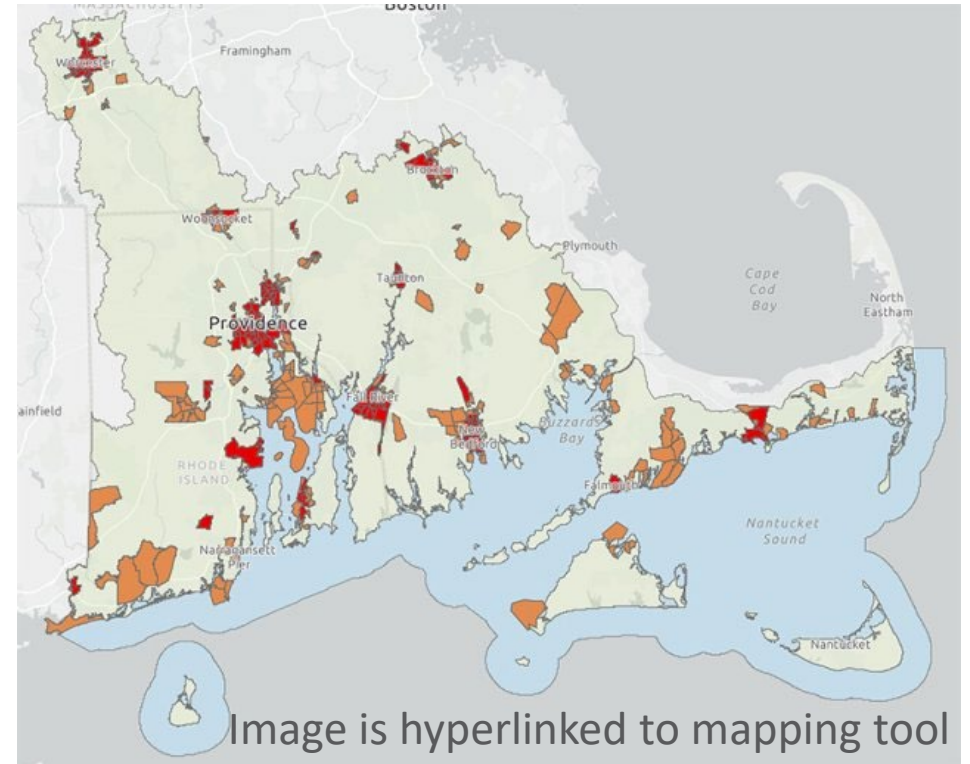
# SOAR Overview - SNEP DAC Definition



For the purposes of this RFP, a “disadvantaged community” as defined by SNEP refers to any community that meets **at least one** of the following criteria:

- Any census block group at or above the **90th percentile** for any of EJSscreen’s Supplemental Indexes when compared to the **nation or state**. The [National Supplemental Demographic Index](#) is an average of:
  - Percent low-income;
  - Percent limited English speaking;
  - Percent less than high school education;
  - Percent unemployed; and where data is available,
  - Communities with low average life expectancy.
- Any census tract defined as disadvantaged in current and future iterations of the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#);
- Any current or future federally recognized Tribal Land; and
- Any census block that meets current and future state-level criteria for disadvantaged communities **other than** those included due to explicit consideration of race-based indicators.

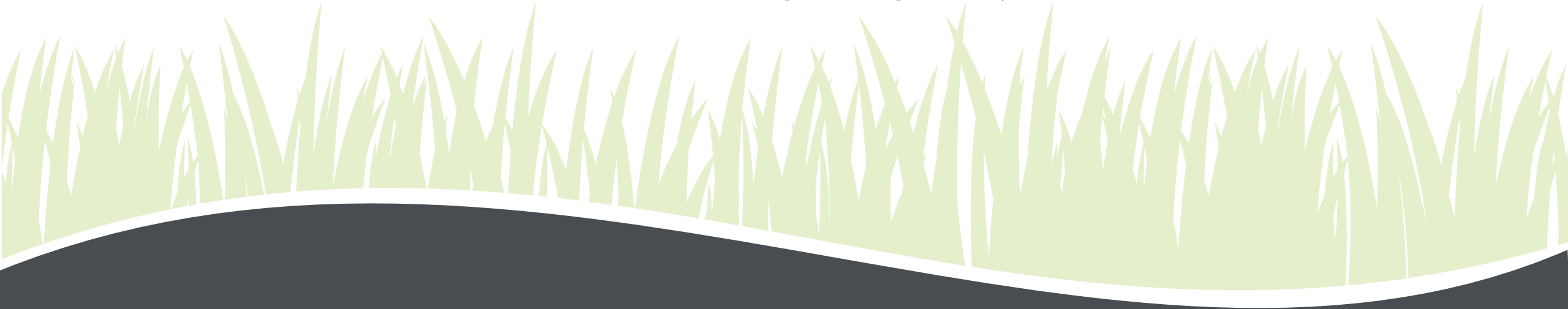
**NOTE: This definition has been updated as of February 2024**





## Project Types

**(To support the goals of the program, applicants should propose projects that broadly address at least one of the following categories)**



# Project Types



## Planning

- Projects that engage subject matter experts and/or local input on the development of technical solutions to address the effects of short-, mid-, to long-term environmental challenges.

## Implementation

- Projects are “shovel-ready” projects that stem from previously completed planning and design efforts. These can include the development of a floodable park, the restoration of a marsh with improved access to recreational spaces, etc.

## Outreach

- Outreach projects can be completed jointly with planning and implementation work. Outreach projects work to gather community input and involvement in the design, support, or understanding of a specific environmental challenge or proposed solution.



# Project Types



## Training

- Projects that focus on the provision of new skillsets to local organizational members or paid volunteers to support environmental restoration practices to improve climate resiliency. Ideally, the training and skillsets provided will have a lasting benefit to recipients of the training and can be used to support environmental protection and career growth.

## Capacity Building/Staffing

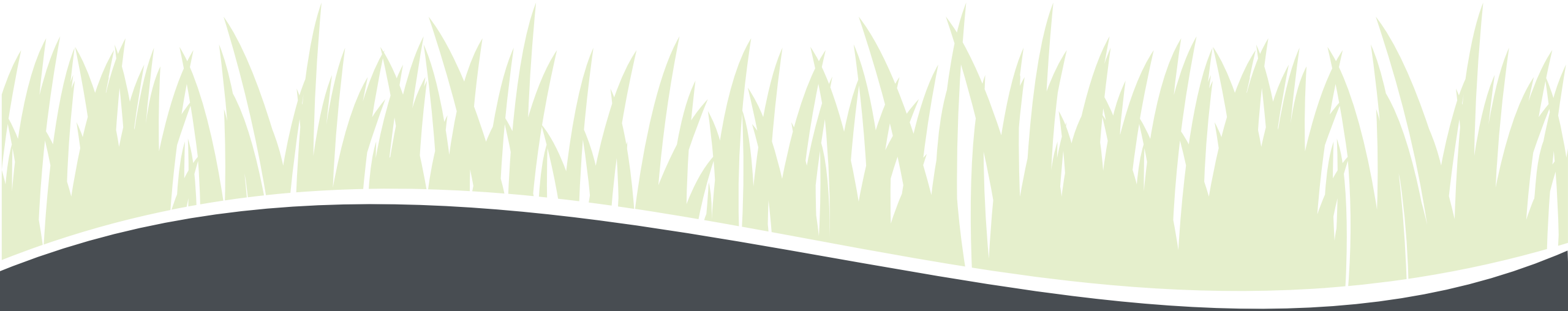
- Grant funds for capacity building and staffing would be applied towards increasing the administrative capacity of an organization to support climate change related projects in underserved and disadvantaged areas. These funds could be used to hire a paid intern or full/partially fund the hiring of a full-time staff person. Ideally, anyone hired with these capacity-building grants will be retained following the end of the grant cycle. Alternatively, grants funded under this category could be used to improve or modernize an organization's capacity to engage in climate change related work in disadvantaged communities (DACs).







# Funding Overview



# SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience



## Funding:

- \$1,250,000 total (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law)
- \$50,000-\$300,000 per cooperative agreement
- No match requirement

## Project Period:

- Up to 5-year project period

## Other Details:

- Build America Buy America
- Project Signage
- Applications completed through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) (CFDA 66.129)



# SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience



## Important Dates:

- Opened: 03/1/2024
- Informational Webinar: 04/16/2024  
11:00am-1:00pm (EDT)
- Last Day to Ask Questions: 05/01/2024
- Application Deadline: 06/7/2024 11:59PM  
(EDT)
- Notification of Selection/Rejection: July  
2024
- Anticipated Deadline for Recipients to  
Submit Remaining Required Application  
Materials: Within 30 Days of Selection  
Notice
- Anticipated Project Start Date: Fall 2024



# Required Documentation



## Required Documents to Apply

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in **Appendix B** of the announcement (refer to Section I.B for required content)
3. Budget Detail (Budget Narrative Attachment Form) – See **Appendix C** for information
4. Letters of support/commitment from any partners identified in the proposal to confirm their partnership.
5. List documenting past or ongoing federal and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements administered by the applicant, including documentation supporting grant performance and meeting of reporting requirements.
6. Documents of non-profit status if appropriate.

## Required within 30 days following notice of selection:

1. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
2. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
3. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report
4. Support Materials (Other Attachment Form)
  - a. Confirmation (or process to confirm) access to private property by their owner(s) required to carry out Project activities.
  - b. Verification of proposed sources of leveraging to the application, if applicable. See Appendix B for additional details.



# SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience



- All applicants must substantially comply with eligibility requirements (Sections III & IV of RFA)
- Eligible Entities:
  - State, Local, Tribal Governments/Departments
  - Institutions of Higher Education
  - Nonprofit Institutions and Organizations
  - Interstate Agencies
- Ineligible Entities
  - Private Business\*
  - Federal Agencies
  - Individuals\*



\*these entities are encouraged to partner with eligible entities

# SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience



- Submissions must be received before June 7, 2024 11:59PM (EDT) via Grants.gov
- Must Support EPA's Strategic Plan Goals (Section I.E)
- Must Include all Mandatory Documentation (Section IV.F)
- Must Be Located in or Directly Benefiting a SNEP DAC
- No page requirements; 5,000 words maximum



# SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience



## Supporting Documents (“Other Attachments Form”)

- Letters of commitment from any partners identified in the proposal in order to confirm their partnership
- List documenting past or ongoing federal and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements administered by the applicant, including documentation supporting grant performance and meeting of reporting requirements
- Documentation of non-profit status if appropriate
- Verification of proposed sources of leveraged funding

# SAM.gov Registration



**SAM.gov registration: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>**

**A UEI Number is required in order to receive federal funding.**

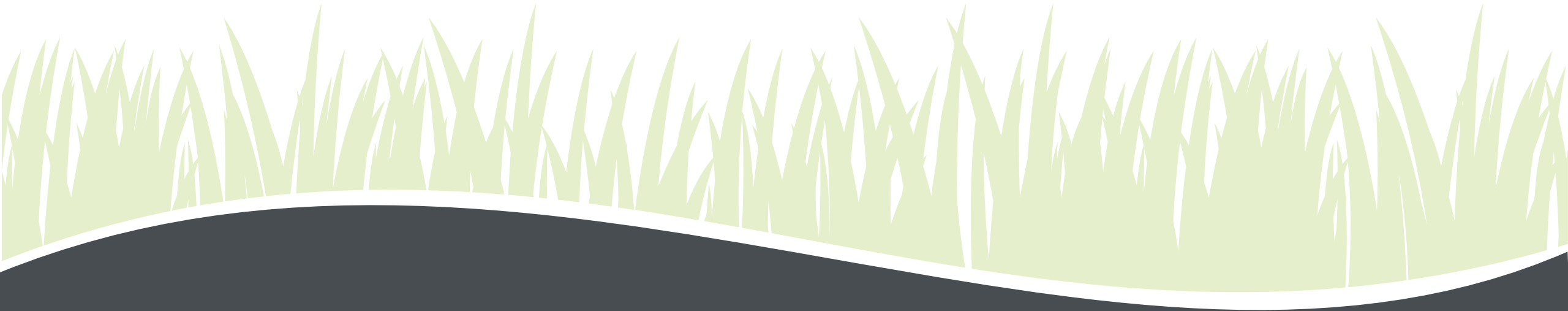
**The unique entity identifier used in SAM.gov has changed.**

- The Unique Entity ID is a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.gov.
- As part of this transition, the DUNS Number has been removed from SAM.gov.
- Entity registration, searching, and data entry in SAM.gov now require use of the new Unique Entity ID.
- Existing registered entities can find their Unique Entity ID by following the steps [here](#).
- New entities can get their Unique Entity ID at SAM.gov and, if required, complete an entity registration.





# Request for Proposals Review Criteria



# Review & Grant Process



- Threshold Eligibility Determination/Notification
- Merit Review by EPA and State Staff
- Review Meeting
- Selection Finalization/ Notification
- If Selected, Submission of Remaining Documentation (within 30 days of selection)
- Processing by Grants Department/ Project Officer
- Award

# Scoring Criteria



## Scoring Criteria (100 Points Total)

- Background and Baseline Conditions (5 pts)
- Project Description and Strategic Plan Linkage (10 pts)
- Community Support and Involvement (15 pts)
- Mission (8 pts)
- Benefits (12 pts)
- Project Timeline and Budget (8 pts)
- Project Successes, Outcomes, and Monitoring (10 pts)
- Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance (12 pts)
- Cost Effectiveness (10 pts)
- Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds (10 pts)

# Background and Baseline Conditions



- Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent and quality to which the application:
  - identifies appropriate DACs. (1 point)
  - describes the baseline environmental challenges associated with the proposed project. (2 points)
  - describes the needs of the community to be impacted by the proposed project. (2 points)

# Project Description and Strategic Plan Linkage



Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent and quality to which the application:

- describes their proposed project. (4 points)
- demonstrates a realistic project given the number of tasks involved and the amount of funding requested. (4 points)
- links to the SNEP Strategic Plan. (2 points)

# Community Support and Involvement



Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent to which the application:

- demonstrates community support for the project. (5 points)
- demonstrates community involvement in the project (design, implementation, maintenance, etc.). (5 points)
- includes quality letters of community support or commitment. If no letters of community support or commitment are provided, the application will be evaluated on the how well it justifies the lack of letters of support or commitment. (5 points)

# Mission



Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent to which the application addresses the mission of the SOAR Fund. (8 pts)

# Benefits



Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate how well the applicant describes the environmental and community benefits associated with how well:

- The anticipated outcomes of their proposed project contribute to the long-term climate resiliency of the identified DAC. (6 pts)
- The anticipated benefits of the project contribute to the long-term climate resiliency of the identified DAC. (6 pts)



# Project Timeline and Budget



Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate:

- the level of detail included in the proposed project timeline. (4 points)
- that the proposed project timeline is clear and realistic. (2 points)
- the extent to which the roles of each project partner are included and clearly defined. (2 points)

# Project Successes, Outcomes, and Monitoring



Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent which the application:

- describes the plan to evaluate and determine project success throughout the duration of their work plan. (4 points)
- identifies appropriate SNEP project metrics (Appendix D) to track throughout the duration of their project. (4 points)
- identifies the need for a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and has budgeted the appropriate time and expense in their project timeline and budget to successfully complete their QAPP, if applicable. (2 points)

# Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results

## Past Performance



Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:

- i) past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.A. of the solicitation, (3 points)
- ii) history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.A. of the solicitation including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not, (3 points)

# Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results

## Past Performance – cont'd



iii) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and (3 points)

iv) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (3 points)

NOTE: In evaluating applicants under items i and ii of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score of 6 points for these subfactors (items i and ii above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

# Cost Effectiveness



Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent which the proposed project is logical, appropriate, and that detailed cost estimates for the work described are cost effective. (10 pts)

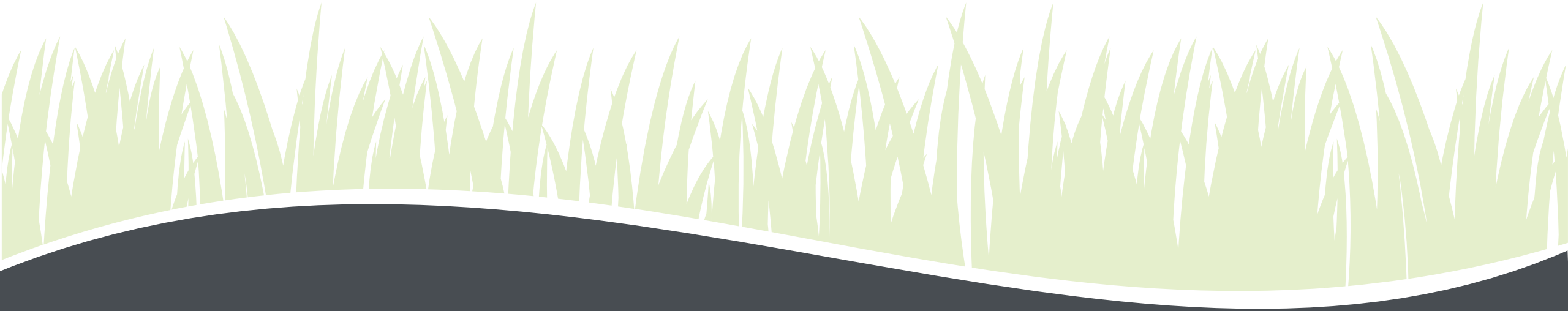
# Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds



Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.  
(10 pts)



**Build America, Buy America**



# Build America, Buy America (BABA)



BABA requires federal infrastructure projects to source American made materials:

1. **All iron and steel** must be American made, “from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings...”
2. **Manufactured products** must also be made in the U.S., meaning the “cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost”
3. **Construction materials** like lumber, plastics, glass, non-ferrous metals, etc., must be sourced from the U.S.



# Build America, Buy America (BABA)



Two important general waivers have already been approved

1. Projects receiving under **\$250,000** of federal funding will be exempt from BABA requirements
2. Up to 5% of the **total project** costs can be used on materials that do not meet BABA requirements

Other waivers may be granted for specific projects or materials after going through a specific application process

For additional questions search “EPA BABA” or go to

<https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/build-america-buy-america-baba>

# BIL Signage Requirement



- Required for all construction/infrastructure projects or projects viewable by public
- Signs should be in place before “dirt is moved” and must remain in place during the course of the project.
- Should be made of recycled material when possible
- EPA may request verification of signage
- Eligible expense
- More specifics in the terms and conditions of the award

# Use of Templates



- Project Narrative and Budget Narrative templates are available via [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- The use of these templates are **OPTIONAL** and not required.
- Applicants will not be penalized for choosing not to use the template.

# Feedback on Pilot Process



- The release of this funding opportunity as an RFP is a pilot initiative of the Southeast New England Program.
- The objective is to reduce the overall application burden, especially for new applicants.
- Because this is a pilot process, we would love to hear about your experience.
- If you are willing, please share your experiences with us via email at [SECoastalNE@epa.gov](mailto:SECoastalNE@epa.gov)
- We would love to hear feedback on the following questions:
  - What was your experience applying to the SOAR Fund?
  - If you have previously applied for SNEP funding via a RFA, do you find the RFP process easier/ more streamlined?
  - If this is your first time applying for SNEP funding, is there anything about the process that you would recommend changing?
  - Do you feel that the release of this funding opportunity as a RFP is successful in making SNEP applications more accessible? If not, what would you change?

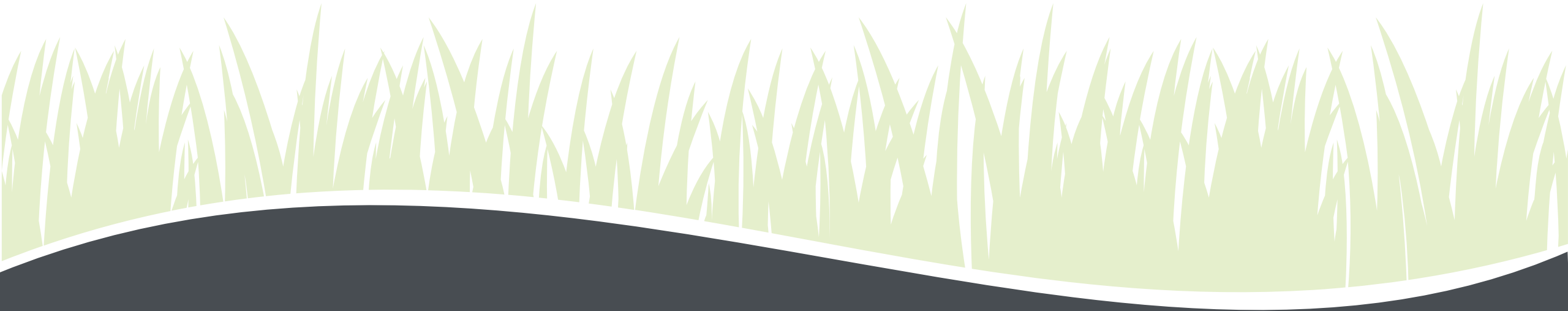


Please Direct Additional Questions to [SECoastalNE@epa.gov](mailto:SECoastalNE@epa.gov)  
by May 1, 2024, 11:59p EDT

**Application Deadline: June 7, 2024, 11:59p EDT**



## Question and Answer Period





**Thank You For Your Time and Attention!**

