

**Federal Agency Name:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Water, Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program

**Announcement Type:** Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-03

**Assistance Listing:** 66.443

**Dates:** The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **December 30, 2024 by 11:59 P.M., Eastern Time, in order to be considered for funding.** Application packages must be submitted electronically to the EPA through Grants.gov ([Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)) no later than **11:59 P.M., Eastern Time, December 30, 2024, in order to be considered for funding.** Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency contact identified in Section VII by **11:59 P.M., Eastern Time, November 13, 2024.** Written responses will be posted on the EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-reducing-lead-drinking-water>.

**Notes 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), including individual consultants, in your application as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at <http://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>.

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## **Section I. Funding Opportunity Description**

### **A. Program Objectives**

The EPA is committed to ensuring that all communities have access to safe, clean, and reliable drinking water. Through the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program competitive announcement, the EPA promotes public health by investing in water infrastructure improvements to address lead exposure in drinking water in disadvantaged communities.

The EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants for lead reduction projects in disadvantaged communities in two National Priority Areas as discussed in further detail below. The EPA expects to make at least one award in each area but may redistribute the awards per area based on the quality of applications received and other applicable considerations.

Awards made through this announcement are intended to promote public health and support the Justice40 initiative by addressing conditions that contribute to increased concentrations of lead in drinking water. Proposed projects must include at least one or more disadvantaged community.

Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the proposed project:(i) is in and/or benefits a disadvantaged community(ies); (ii) benefits drinking water systems with at least one lead action level exceedance within the last three years or addresses lead levels in drinking water in schools/childcare facilities; and (iii) supports the Justice40 initiative.

For the purpose of this announcement, a disadvantaged community is defined by Section 1452(d)(3) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) as, “The service area of a public water system that meets affordability criteria established after public review and comment by the state in which the public water system is located.” The affordability criteria must be met for the disadvantaged community(ies) in which the project will be performed. More information about a state’s affordability criteria can be found in a state’s most current final Intended Use Plan or by contacting the state Drinking Water Revolving Fund program. For purposes of this announcement, all eligible U.S. territories are considered disadvantaged. With respect to this announcement, the benefits as described under Justice40 include actions that support or aid improvements to communities experiencing disproportionate drinking water access and affordability environmental stressors. More information on the Justice40 initiative is [available on EPA’s Justice40 website](#).

Applications that are solely comprised of planning, training, and technical assistance projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

### **B. National Priority Areas**

Each application submitted under this announcement must address one, and only one, of the National Priority Areas described below. Applicants may submit more than one application package under this funding announcement so long as each application is separately submitted and addresses only **one** National Priority Area (NPA). The cover page of the application package

must clearly indicate the National Priority Area being addressed in the application. If an applicant submits an application addressing more than one National Priority Area, it will be deemed ineligible.

### **National Priority Area One: Reduction of Lead Exposure in the Nation's Drinking Water Systems through Full Lead Service Line Replacements and Treatment Improvements**

Under this NPA, the EPA is soliciting applications to reduce lead in drinking water in disadvantaged communities through full lead service line replacements or treatment improvements, such as corrosion control practices.

The goal of the full lead service line replacements and/or treatment improvement projects under this NPA is to reduce lead in drinking water in disadvantaged communities, improve and maintain the drinking water supply, and protect public health. Applicants should describe how they will document and report progress toward meeting this goal, as described in Section I.D, EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results. Applicants should also describe how their project supports the Justice40 initiative.

The objectives for projects carried out under this NPA are the following:

- Applicants should describe their proposed approach for reducing lead in drinking water in disadvantaged communities and enabling drinking water systems to comply with regulatory requirements applicable to the system. For the purposes of this announcement, a "drinking water system" means any community water system, a non-transient non-community water system, or a water system located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe. See EPA's website for further definitions of [public drinking water systems](#). If the proposed project is part of a larger, ongoing lead exposure reduction effort, the applicant should include a brief description of how the proposed project complements the broader effort.
- Applicants should describe the known lead issue in the disadvantaged community by describing, for example, any lead action level exceedances the system has had, factors consistent with lead service line presence such as historical use in the area or age of housing, service line inventories, historical challenges in meeting the requirements of the Lead and Copper Rule (as defined in [40 CFR Part 141, Subpart I](#)), and any other information relevant to demonstrating the need for the proposed lead reduction project.
- Applicants should describe the proposed approach to provide public education and conduct outreach related to the project, such as how they plan to engage community members to educate them on the health effects of lead exposure via drinking water, provide proper notification to lead reduction projects prior to the start of the project, risk mitigation over the course of lead service line replacement projects, and provide updates as the project proceeds. Best practices for risk mitigation during a lead service line replacement project include, but are not limited to, provision of point-of-use filters or pitcher filters certified by an American National Standards Institute accredited

certifier once the replacement starts until at least six months following completion of the replacement, provision of information and/or training to ensure that equipment is used properly, pipe flushing recommendations, tap sampling between three and six months after replacement, and installation of dielectric coupling to minimize corrosion where partial replacements are necessary to replace remnants of previous partial replacement efforts. After completing full lead service line replacements or implementing treatment changes, applicants should conduct water quality sampling to ensure successful lead remediation and implement risk mitigation best practices.

- Applicants should describe their approach to conduct post-implementation drinking water quality monitoring during the project period to verify that lead levels are reduced as anticipated.
- Applicants should describe their approach to implementing risk mitigation best practices such as providing certified filters and associated information on proper usage to residents and pipe flushing.
- Applicants should describe proposed plans to maintain lead level reductions after project completion to ensure that public health protection is maintained through, for example, maintenance plans for corrosion control treatment in the case of a treatment improvement project.
- Applicants must demonstrate the ability and readiness to proceed expeditiously upon receiving an award. Applicant must also describe their plan and proposed approach to proceed expeditiously to implement the projects to reduce lead as described further in Section I.C, Expeditious Project Readiness to Proceed.

Examples of eligible lead reduction activities to support this NPA may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Replacing lead service lines (including goosenecks, pigtails and/or other lead components) and/or replacement of partial lead service line remnants of previous partial replacement efforts. Publicly-owned, privately-owned, and jointly-owned service lines are eligible for replacement under this grant program. **Note that partial lead service line replacements are not an eligible activity unless replacing remnants of previous partial replacement efforts.**
- Replacing galvanized pipes downstream of a lead service line.
- Improving corrosion control to reduce lead in drinking water through installation or re-optimization of corrosion control treatment.
- If the project includes lead service line replacement, developing and maintaining the drinking water system's service line inventory to accurately track existing lead service lines and replacements of full or partial lead service lines. Inventories may also include lead pigtails and/or lead goosenecks.
- As a part of the project funded under this grant, conducting risk mitigation and remediation follow-up monitoring, public education, and related outreach such as provision of ANSI accredited point-of-use filters, and training to implement pipe flushing

recommendations to minimize customer and resident lead exposure for up to six months following replacement.

#### SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECTS:

Applications including lead service line replacement projects must include a description of the proposed approach for the following required project elements:

1. Ensuring full lead service line replacement (LSLR). Full LSLR is the replacement of a lead service line that results in the entire length of the service line, regardless of service line ownership, meeting the SDWA section 1417 definition of “lead free” after replacement. Therefore, the publicly-owned and privately-owned portions of a lead service line will be replaced, or, if replacing partial lead service lines that are remnants of previous partial replacement efforts, ensuring that no section of lead service line remains in place. Applicants shall ensure that the privately-owned portion of a lead service line is replaced at no cost to the homeowner.
2. Notifying customers and residents of the replacement of the lead service line.
3. Notifying each customer that a replacement of any publicly-owned portion of the lead service line that is funded by this grant program will not be carried out unless the customer agreed to the simultaneous replacement of the privately-owned portion of the lead service line.
4. Ensuring customers and residents are provided with filters certified to remove lead, in accordance with applicable standards established by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or National Sanitation Foundation International (NSF), once the replacement starts until at least six months following completion of the replacement along with no less than three months of replacement cartridges, providing information to ensure proper usage of filters, conducting pipe flushing and notifying each customer of premise plumbing flushing instructions within 24 hours of the conclusion of each lead service line replacement, and post replacement lead testing(s).
5. Demonstrating that the applicant has considered other options for reducing the concentration of lead in its drinking water, including an evaluation of options for corrosion control.
6. Notifying the State of any planned replacement of lead service lines under this program and coordinate, where practicable, with other relevant infrastructure projects.

The EPA also encourages applicants to propose other types of activities that may achieve the objectives of this NPA.

#### **National Priority Area Two: Reducing Children’s Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities**

Under this NPA, the EPA is soliciting applications for projects in disadvantaged communities that will reduce children’s exposure to lead in schools and childcare facilities through removal

and/or replacement of lead-containing drinking water fixtures, fountains, outlets, and plumbing materials.

For the purposes of this announcement, a childcare facility is defined as a Head Start program or an Early Head Start program, a state-licensed or regulated childcare program, a state pre-kindergarten program, or a program operated by a local educational agency serving children from birth through age six.

For the purposes of this announcement, a school is defined as a nonprofit institutional day or residential school, including a public charter school, that provides elementary or secondary education, as determined under state law, from kindergarten through grade twelve. This definition, for the purposes of this announcement, also includes a school or community college that is controlled by an Indian Tribe, band, or nation, including any Alaska Native Villages, which is recognized as eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians. Facilities administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs are not included in this definition for the purposes of this announcement.

The goal of lead reduction projects under this NPA is to reduce lead in drinking water in schools and/or childcare facilities in disadvantaged communities, improve and maintain the drinking water supply, and protect public health. Applicants should describe how they will document and report progress toward meeting this goal, as described in Section I.D, EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results. Applicants should also describe how their project supports the Justice40 initiative.

The objectives for projects carried out under this NPA are the following:

- Applicants should describe their proposed approach for projects serving disadvantaged communities that will reduce children's exposure to lead through the removal and/or replacement of drinking water fixtures, fountains, outlets, and plumbing materials in schools and childcare facilities, including full lead service line replacement serving such facilities. See Section I.A. for information about disadvantaged community status. If the proposed project is part of a larger, ongoing lead exposure reduction effort, the applicant should include a brief description of how the proposed project complements the broader effort.
- Applicants should describe the known lead issue in the disadvantaged communities' school and/or childcare facilities by describing, for example, the process for identifying and prioritizing the removal or replacement of drinking water fixtures, fountains, outlets, and/or plumbing (including lead service lines).
- Applicants should describe the proposed approach to provide public education and conduct outreach related to the project, such as how they plan to engage community members to educate them on the health effects of lead exposure via drinking water, provide proper notification regarding lead reduction projects prior to the start of the project, and provide updates as the project proceeds.

- After completing the removal or replacement of drinking water fixtures, fountains, outlets, and/or plumbing materials, or implementing treatment changes, applicants should conduct water quality sampling to ensure successful lead remediation. Applicant should describe their approach to conduct post-implementation drinking water quality monitoring to verify that lead levels are reduced as anticipated.
- Applicants should describe proposed plans to maintain lead level reductions after project completion to ensure that public health protection is maintained through, for example, a drinking water management plan for a school or childcare facility.
- Applicants must demonstrate the ability and readiness to proceed expeditiously upon receiving an award. Applicant must describe their plan and proposed approach to proceed expeditiously to implement the projects to reduce lead as described further in Section I.C, Expeditious Project Readiness to Proceed.

Examples of eligible lead reduction activities to support this NPA may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Removing or replacing drinking water fixtures, fountains, or outlets determined to be sources of lead in schools and/or childcare facilities' drinking water.
- Replacing plumbing materials determined to be sources of lead in schools and/or childcare facilities' drinking water, including full replacement of lead service lines serving such facilities.
- Conducting follow-up monitoring, public education, and outreach to ensure the long-term performance of the remediation.
- Providing filters certified to remove lead, in accordance with the applicable standards established by ANSI or NSF post full lead remediations, along with no less than three months of replacement cartridges, notifying the schools and/or childcare facilities of premise flushing instructions within 24 hours of the conclusion, and post-remediation lead testing(s).

The EPA also encourages applicants to propose other types of activities that may achieve the objectives of this NPA.

### **C. Expeditious Project Readiness to Proceed**

Applications for projects under both NPAs described above should demonstrate the applicant's ability and approach to expeditiously reducing lead in drinking water in disadvantaged communities throughout the nation upon receiving an award.

Applicants should describe past and current practices being implemented to reduce exposure of lead in drinking water. When describing completed projects, applicants should include information regarding project planning and design phases. Applicants must demonstrate that

all required permits and approvals from the appropriate regulatory authority have been obtained.

Supporting documentation demonstrating readiness to proceed may be submitted as optional attachments to applications, as referenced in Section IV of this solicitation. These additional documents are not subject to the 25-page limitation under the Project Narrative. Please note the “Expeditious Project Readiness to Proceed” evaluation criteria in Section V. Examples of supporting documentation may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Existing bid documentation.
- Available construction schedules.
- Easements.
- Any legal agreements to access private property to complete the project.
- Agreements or planned agreements between an applicant that is a qualified nonprofit organization servicing a public water system.

It is important to note that under the Lead and Copper Rule, as defined in 40 CFR Part 141, Subpart I, prior to any long-term change in water treatment, water systems are required to notify the primacy agency in writing of the change or addition. The primacy agency must review **and** approve the long-term change in treatments before it is implemented by the water system. Applications that include corrosion control treatment that will typically fall under NPA 1, projects must demonstrate the treatment change has been approved by the primacy agency.

#### **D. 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. This announcement is consistent with the EPA’s priority to address conditions that contribute to increased concentrations of lead in drinking water.

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

The EPA also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see [EPA Order 5700.7A1, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements](#)). All proposed projects must demonstrate a linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall protection of human health and the environment by ensuring safe drinking water. Outputs and outcomes should directly address the goal of reducing lead in drinking water in disadvantaged communities.



Environmental 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 a period of 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 environmental outputs from assistance agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for NPA 1, *Reduction of Lead Exposure in the Nation's Drinking Water Systems through Full Lead Service Line Replacement and Treatment Improvements*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Completing or improving the drinking water system's service line inventory to accurately identify and track existing lead service lines and replacements.
- A decrease in the number of lead service lines and galvanized pipes downstream of lead service lines in the drinking water system.
- An increase in the number of customer and resident tap sampling for lead concentrations between three-and six-months following lead service line replacement as a risk mitigation best practice.
- Improved corrosion control in the drinking water system, as measured by maintaining optimal water quality parameters and decreasing the amount of lead action level exceedances through lower concentrations of lead.
- An increased number of customers and residents with information about lead in drinking water, achieved through outreach and public education.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from assistance agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for NPA 2, *Reducing Children's Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A decreased number of drinking water fixtures, fountains, outlets, plumbing, and/or lead service lines in schools and/or childcare facilities associated with high levels of lead in drinking water.
- An increased number of schools and/or childcare facilities administrations, faculty, staff, and community members with information about lead in drinking water, achieved through outreach and public education.
- An increased number of drinking water outlets with filters certified to remove lead, in accordance with the applicable standards established by ANSI or NSF.
- An increase in schools with fully replaced and/ or known lead-free drinking water service lines.

Environmental 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 the project's performance. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature. Outcomes may not necessarily be achieved within the assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (such as changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (such as

changes in behavior, practices or decisions), or long-term (such as changes in the condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from assistance agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for NPA 1, *Reduction of Lead Exposure in the Nation's Drinking Water Systems through Full Lead Service Line Replacement and Treatment Improvements*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An overall and consistent reduction of measured lead concentration in drinking water by reducing sources of lead in drinking water systems.
- An overall measurable increase in public awareness of the health effects of lead in drinking water and the efforts towards reducing sources of lead in the drinking water.

Examples of anticipated environmental outcomes from assistance agreements expected to be awarded under this announcement for NPA 2, *Reducing Children's Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities*, may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An overall reduction in lead exposure and its associated harms by reducing sources of lead in drinking water in schools and childcare facilities.
- An overall improvement in blood lead levels in children in disadvantaged communities through increased efforts to remove sources of lead.
- An overall increase in parents', childcare and school staff's awareness of the health effects of lead in drinking water and the efforts towards reducing children's exposure to lead in drinking water in schools and childcare facilities.

As part of the Project Narrative, applicants are required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan and to the goal of reducing lead in drinking water through full lead service line replacements and/or treatment improvements or facility remediation in schools and/or childcare facilities. In addition, applicants will have to describe their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving expected outputs and outcomes.

#### **E. Statutory Authority**

The statutory authority for the awards expected to be made under this announcement is, as appropriate, Section 1459B of SDWA, which authorizes the EPA to provide grants for projects to reduce the concentration of lead in water for human consumption.

#### **F. 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 Section VII of this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

## **Section II. Award Information**

### **A. Amount of Funding**

The total estimated amount of federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$35,000,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.

The following are the anticipated amounts of total awards in each of the NPAs:

1. Under NPA 1, *Reduction of Lead Exposure in the Nation's Drinking Water Systems through Full Lead Service Line Replacement and Treatment Improvements*, the EPA anticipates awarding approximately two to four assistance agreements ranging from approximately \$5,000,000 to no more than \$10,000,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s). The total anticipated amount of federal funding to potentially be made available under this NPA is approximately \$20,000,000 depending on agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. The project period is anticipated to be up to four years.
2. Under NPA 2, *Reducing Children's Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities*. EPA anticipates awarding approximately three to five assistance agreements ranging from approximately \$2,000,000 to no more than \$5,000,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s). The total anticipated amount of federal funding to potentially be made available under this NPA is approximately \$15,000,000 depending on agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. The project period is anticipated to be up to four years.

The actual award amounts and number of projects awarded under each of the NPAs described in Section I may differ from the estimated amounts for many reasons including the number of meritorious applications received, agency priorities, and funding availability. In addition, the EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including decreasing to zero) the total number and amounts of awards or change the ratio of awards made under each NPA.

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. 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.

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 an award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

## **B. Type of Funding**

The successful applicant(s) will be issued a grant or cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the recipient's performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements, reviewing qualifications of key personnel, and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. 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.

## **Section III. Eligibility Information**

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

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants under this competition include the following:

- Community water systems
- Water systems located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe<sup>1</sup>
- Non-transient non-community water systems
- Qualified nonprofit organizations servicing a public water system<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Indian Tribe" as defined in Section 1401(14) means any Indian tribe having a Federally recognized governing body carrying out substantial governmental duties and powers over any area. For the purposes of this grant, the term includes any Native village (as defined in section 3(c) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602(c))).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

- Municipalities
- State<sup>3</sup>, interstate, or intermunicipal agencies

Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply.

## **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

No cost-share/match is required under this announcement.

If an applicant includes voluntary cost-share it must be for eligible and allowable project costs and must be used for reasonable and necessary expenses to carry out the workplan. Voluntary cost sharing is when an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project beyond what is required by the mandatory cost share, if applicable. **Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share *must* include the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost share in the project budget on the SF-424 and SF-424A.** The EPA *will* evaluate applicants' voluntary cost share as described in Section V.A. The recipient choosing to use voluntary cost share is legally obligated to meet the proposed voluntary cost share included in the approved budget and workplan. If the proposed voluntary cost share does not materialize during the performance period of the grant or cooperative agreement, the EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by [2 CFR Part 200](#).

Voluntary cost share/match may be provided in cash or can come from in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, and expertise, subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 CFR 200.306 as applicable. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs, and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. All grant funds are subject to federal audit and are subject to the regulations governing cost share/matching fund requirements at 2 CFR 200.306.

Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of funding restrictions are outlined in Section III.C of this announcement) also apply to the use of voluntary cost share/matching funds. Other federal grants may not be used as cost share/match without specific statutory authority.

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The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that 2 CFR 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation.

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.

<sup>3</sup> The term "State" as defined in Section 1401(13)(A) of the SDWA, includes, in addition to the States, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

### **C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., and C. to be considered eligible for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

An application must meet the following criteria to be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement:

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A. of this announcement at the time of application submission.
2. Applications must address one, and only one, of the two NPAs listed in Section I.B. Eligible organizations may submit more than one application under this solicitation as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses only one NPA. Applications that address more than one NPA in a single application will not be reviewed.
3. Applications must address the goals and objectives under each NPA as described in Section I.B.
4. Applications that primarily address planning, training, and technical assistance will not be eligible for funding.
5. Applications must demonstrate that the proposed project takes place in at least one disadvantaged community, as described in Section I.A. of this announcement. The affordability criteria must be met for the community for which the project will be performed. Applicants must include their state's affordability criteria and how the proposed project meets affordability criteria. Applicants can obtain more information about their state's affordability criteria in their state's most current final Intended Use Plan or contact their state Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program for more information.
6. Applications that include lead service line replacement activities under NPA 1 must address the special requirements for lead service line replacement projects, as outlined in Section I.B.
7. Applications that include corrosion control treatment activities under NPA 1 must demonstrate that the treatment change has been reviewed and approved by the primacy agency.
8. Applications cannot request more than \$10,000,000 in federal funds when applying for awards under NPA 1 and cannot request more than \$5,000,000 in federal funds when applying for awards under NPA 2. Applications exceeding the maximum federal funds amount for the applicable NPA will not be reviewed.
9. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. 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. Section IV.E.2 establishes a 25-page, single-spaced Project Narrative page limit. 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 application.

10. 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 announcement. 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 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.
11. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with [Grants.gov](#) or [SAM.gov](#). An applicant's failure to timely submit its 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 submission outside of Grants.gov.
12. 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. As an example, applications that include projects solely comprised of planning, training, and technical assistance projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

#### **Section IV. Application and Submission Information**

**Note:** Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found within [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 IV. C. of this announcement.

##### **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](#) 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 Questions](#) 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 17 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](mailto:support@grants.gov).

Applicants need to ensure that the 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 Deadline Submission

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to the EPA through Grants.gov no later than **December 30, 2024, by 11:59 PM ET**. 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 this procedure 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-24-03> in the subject line to [WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov](mailto:WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov) before the application deadline time and date, which 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 or relevant 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:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Project Narrative, prepared as described in Section IV.E.2. of this announcement.

Optional Documents:

6. Other Attachments Form – Biographical Sketches
7. Other Attachments Form – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable
8. Other Attachments Form – Supporting documentation demonstrating readiness to proceed
9. Other Attachments Form – Supporting documentation describing the known lead issue.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from the EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact [WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov](mailto:WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov). Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

## E. Content of Application Package Submission

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

### 1. Application Materials

- a. **Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance.** Complete the form. If applicable, include voluntary cost share.
- b. **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 amount should also be indicated on line 22. In Section B, Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for nonfederal cost- share/match if any, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (combined federal funds and any voluntary cost-share).
- 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 this form. There are no attachments. [Tips for filling out this form are available.](#)
- e. **Project Narrative.** See Section IV.E.2. for details on specific information that must be included. Applicants should refer to Section I.B. of this announcement, which provides a project description and example eligible activities for the applicable NPA.
- f. **Biographical Sketches.** Submit a biographical sketch of each major project manager, support staff member, or other major project participant (see Section IV.E.2.C.vi.2.).
- g. **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** (if indirect costs are included in your proposed project budget). The Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is not included in the 25-page single-spaced Project Narrative page limit. See [Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for additional information about indirect cost rates.
- h. **Supporting documentation demonstrating readiness to proceed.** Submit documentation that demonstrates readiness to proceed expeditiously upon award. This may include, but is not limited to: planning and design permits from the appropriate regulatory authority (such as the primacy agency or municipality), bid documents, construction schedules, and any legal agreements (essential for lead

service line replacement on private land).

- i. **Supporting documentation describing the known lead issue.** Submit documentation that describes the known lead issue in the project area. This may include, but it not limited to: historical sampling results (such as lead testing or action level exceedance information) or inventories of lead components (such as service lines, water fountains, and/or faucets).

## 2. Project Narrative

The Project Narrative must include sections A-C below. The Project Narrative is limited to no more than twenty-five (25) typewritten, single-spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper) including the cover page and executive summary. 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 give attention to selection of an appropriate font for use in the Project Narrative. Additional pages beyond the 25-page limit will not be considered. Documents listed in Section IV.E.f.-i. do not count towards the 25-page Project Narrative limitation.

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

### a. Cover Page (included in the page limit)

- i. Project title;
- ii. National Priority Area from Section I.B. that is addressed in the application (applicants must address only one National Priority Area per application package);
- iii. Name of applicant;
- iv. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number); and
- v. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested, any non-federal funds that are included, and the total project cost).

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

**c. Workplan:** The workplan must address the following elements:

### i. National Priority Area:

1. Describe the approach for addressing one of the two NPAs described in Section I of this announcement. Provide a description

of the extent to which the project supports lead reduction for the disadvantaged community(ies) in which the project takes place.

2. Describe the known lead issue in the disadvantaged community.
  3. Describe the approach to provide public education, conduct outreach, and conduct risk mitigation activities and post-implementation monitoring.
  4. Describe how maintenance of lead level reductions will be achieved after project completion.
  5. Describe how the proposed project promoted public health and supports the Justice40 initiative.
  6. If the proposed project includes lead service line replacement, also describe the approach for addressing the required project elements outlined in Section I.B.
- ii. **Expedient Project Readiness to Proceed:** Demonstrate that the project will be ready to proceed expeditiously upon award of funding. Describe past and current practices being implemented to reduce lead exposure in drinking water. Describe the completed project planning and design phases if relevant. As appropriate, demonstrate that all necessary permits and approvals from the relevant regulatory authority, bid documents, construction schedules, and any necessary legal agreements have been obtained. If the project includes corrosion control treatment, demonstrate the approval of the corrosion control treatment project that is to be implemented.

**Submission of supporting documentation demonstrating this readiness to proceed may be included as optional attachments and are not subject to the Project Narrative page limitation.**

iii. **Environmental Results and Measuring Progress:**

1. Stated Objective/Link to EPA's Strategic Plan - List the objective of the project and the linkage to EPA's 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.D of this announcement).
2. Results of Activities (Outputs) - Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and describe an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).
3. Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements that will be

accomplished as a result of the project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment or public health which are a result of the accomplishment of the work plan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).

- iv. **Milestone Schedule:** Provide a projected milestone schedule for the proposed project period (one to four years). The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into 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.
- v. **Detailed Budget Narrative:** 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.” Please see [EPA’s Budget Development Guidance](#) which includes a sample budget.

Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs and total cost. All subgrant funding should be located in the “other” cost category. Total costs must include both federal and any voluntary cost share funds; indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by the EPA and what portion of the cost will be paid with non-federal funds, if any. 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.

- vi. **Programmatic Capability/Experience:**
  - 1. 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 its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
  - 2. Staff Expertise/Qualifications – Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their experience/expertise/qualifications, cultural competency, knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project, including demonstrated knowledge of state and local regulations and

policies relevant to the program or project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). A biographical sketch must be submitted for each major project manager, support staff member or other major project participant. Biographical sketches are not counted in the page limit. Full resumes may be included as an appendix to the application narrative and are not counted in the page limit. If you choose to identify any partner organizations who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants), please refer to Section I.F. before doing so, as the EPA will not consider their qualifications unless you select them in compliance with the applicable regulations and provisions.

- vii. **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 the EPA agreements if previously awarded) and:
1. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
  2. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
  3. 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 an applicant's past performance, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and/or 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 information, please indicate this in the application, and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. **Failure to provide any programmatic 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).

- viii. **Quality Assurance/Quality Control (not included in the page limit)** – If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A. of this announcement for additional information).

**Note:** The applicant should also provide in the Project Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already addressed above.

**F. Submission Dates and Times**

Applications submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be received by **11:59 PM, Eastern Time, December 30, 2024**. Late applications will not be considered for funding.

**Section V. Application Review Information**

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

**A. Evaluation Criteria**

All eligible applications, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights 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.

Evaluation Criteria	Point Value
<p><b>1) National Priority Area</b></p> <p>Under this criterion, the applicant will be evaluated based on their ability and approach for reducing lead in drinking water through effectively addressing the National Priority Area that is the subject of their application. See Section I.B of this announcement. In conducting this evaluation, the following factors will be evaluated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. The extent and quality of the overall approach to addressing the National Priority Area that is the subject of the application. <b>(14 points)</b></li><li>ii. The extent and quality to which the applicant describes a known lead issue in the disadvantaged community. <b>(4 points)</b></li><li>iii. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates plans to provide public education, conduct outreach, and conduct risk mitigation activities and post-implementation monitoring. <b>(6 points)</b></li></ul>	<b>35 Points</b>



<p>iv. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates plans to maintain lead reduction after project completion. <b>(4 points)</b></p> <p>v. The degree to which the proposed project: (i) is in and/or benefits a disadvantaged community(ies); (ii) benefits drinking water systems with at least one lead action level exceedance within the last three years, or addresses lead levels in drinking water in schools/childcare facilities; and (iii) supports the Justice40 initiative. <b>(7 points)</b></p>	
<p><b>2) Expeditious Project Readiness to Proceed</b>  Under this criterion applicants will be evaluated based on their ability, plan, and approach to proceeding expeditiously to implement the project upon award (see Section I.C of this announcement) taking into account the following factors:</p> <p>i. The extent and quality to which the application describes past and current practices being implemented to reduce lead exposure in drinking water. <b>(5 points)</b></p> <p>ii. The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates completion of planning and design, and securement of necessary approvals to proceed expeditiously. <b>(10 points)</b></p>	<b>15 Points</b>
<p><b>3) Environmental Results and Measuring Progress</b>  Applications will be evaluated based on each of the following sub-criteria:</p> <p>i. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA’s Strategic Plan described in Section I.D of this announcement. <b>(5 points)</b></p> <p>ii. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement). <b>(5 points)</b></p>	<b>10 Points</b>
<p><b>4) Milestone Schedule/Detailed Budget</b>  Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the application addresses each of the following sub-criteria:</p> <p>i. The adequacy and completeness of the 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. <b>(8 points)</b></p>	<b>15 Points</b>

<p>ii. The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task, the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget, and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. Total costs must include both federal and, if applicable, nonfederal components. The cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs (both federal and voluntary cost share components) will also be evaluated. <b>(7 points)</b></p>	
<p><b>5) Programmatic Capability/Experience</b>  Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant’s ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:</p> <p>i. Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their organizational infrastructure as it relates to the ability to successfully implement the proposed project. <b>(8 points)</b></p> <p>ii. Staff expertise/qualifications, cultural competency, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. <b>(7 points)</b></p>	<b>15 Points</b>
<p><b>6) Past Performance</b>  Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <p>i. 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) performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements). <b>(4 points)</b></p> <p>ii. 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) performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. <b>(2 points)</b></p> <p>iii. The extent and quality to which the applicant adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) 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),</p>	<b>10 Points</b>

<p>and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. <b>(4 points)</b></p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under (i), (ii), and (iii) above, the EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and/or 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 they will receive a neutral score (half of the points) for the factor (i.e., 2 points for item (i), 1 point for item (ii), and 2 points for item (iii)).</p> <p>Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factor (i.e., 0 points for item (i), 0 points for item (ii), and 0 points for item (iii)).</p>	
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**B. Review and Selection Criteria**

All applications received via Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C of the announcement. Applications that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel(s) comprised of EPA staff will review the eligible applications by National Priority Area based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. Two separate ranking lists, one per National Priority Area, will be developed based on the panel evaluations. The ranking list for each National Priority Area will be provided to the Headquarters Selection Official(s), who make(s) the final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions for each National Priority Area, the Selection Official(s) will consider the application score/ranking and may also take into account geographic distribution. As noted above, while the EPA intends to make awards in each National Priority Area, it reserves the right not to do so and to redistribute the number of awards per area.

**Section VI. Award Administration Information**

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

**A. Award Notifications**

The EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This 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 Grants Management and Business Operations Division. Applicants are cautioned that 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., work plan), which must be approved by the EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

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

1. Components to be funded under the assistance 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 the EPA (for cooperative agreements only) 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 part 200 and part 1500, as applicable. A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in the grant or 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 either quarterly or biannually and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 120 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, the EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the work plan consistent with 2 CFR part 200 and part 1500 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.

### **Section VII. Agency Contact**

In accordance with the EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to 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 questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about any of the language or provisions in the announcement. Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in Section VII of this announcement as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting an application. 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 by **11:59 PM Eastern Time, November 13, 2024**. Written responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs) will be posted on the EPA's Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Grant: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water website at <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-reducing-lead-drinking-water>. The EPA strongly recommends interested applicants refer to the FAQs webpage prior to submitting a question.

**E-mail:** [WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov](mailto:WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov)

### **Section VIII. Other Information**

#### **A. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)**

Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) requirements may apply to these grants (see 2 CFR 1500.12). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Successful applicants should allow enough time and resources for this process. The EPA can assist successful applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed

project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the successful applicant may work with EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. The Agency's Enterprise Quality Management Division (EQMD) webpage contains information, including documents to assist in the development and implementation of a suitable Quality System, and is located at <https://www.epa.gov/quality>. For further information, see Section VII, Agency Contact for Agency Contact information for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

Successful applicants must ensure all water quality data generated in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan, either directly or by subaward, are transmitted into the Agency's Water Quality Exchange (WQX) data system (formerly known as STORET) annually or by project completion. More information about WQX and WQXweb, including tutorials, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data-wqx>.

#### **B. 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 workplan.