

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

As stated in 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”

General Application Questions

A1. When does EPA anticipate notifying applicants regarding awards?

Section VI.A. Award Notifications, states in part “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. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.”

A2. I am writing about the funding amount listed in EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-03 compared to what is listed on SAM for FY24. SAM estimates that FY24 is \$181,818,000

(<https://sam.gov/fal/42ca9eed0720457897446479922fcb0c/view>). This is six times what is listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity as the Amount of Funding: \$35,000,000 (<https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/356508>). What is the SAM amount supposed to represent?

As stated in Section II.A, Amount of Funding, in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-03, Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program “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 FY 2024 Obligations estimate for Assistance Listing 66.443 Reducing Lead in Drinking Water (SDWA 1459B) in SAM.gov is an estimate only.

A3. There have been ongoing efforts to solve the contaminated water in our community, but due to lack of available funds and lack of personnel to oversee the project, not much has been done to tackle the root of the problem - aging and degradation of water infrastructure. I don't know where to start for the application process. What would need to be done to start the application process? Do you have any suggestions on where to start? Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Information is available on [the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation \(WIIN\) Act Grant Programs](#) web page and Grants.gov. Training, guidance, resources and information for how to apply to EPA grant funding opportunities is available at [EPA Grants](#).

A4. Please send me the full announcement of the following NOFO.

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

Funding Opportunity Title: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program

The full announcement for the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water NOFO is available at [WIIN Grant: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water](#). The full announcement and application package is available on Grants.gov. You can search Grants.gov by the Funding Opportunity Number EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-03 or Assistance Listing 66.443. Section IV, Application and Submission Information. of the NOFO provides further application and submission information. Section III.C Threshold Eligibility Criteria states “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.”

A5. We have looked at this grant opportunity and understand that we can only file one application in a national priority area. However, if we have a program for both residential LSLR and for schools/day cares are we permitted to file one application in each priority area?

Section III.C., Threshold Eligibility Criteria states “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.”

A6. Would you please send me some information or the definition of NOFO?

You may find information about the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program [here](#). NOFO stands for Notice of Funding Opportunity.

A7. We’re reviewing the new announcement regarding the grant for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water and were curious as if there is an amount that the state lab could request for testing.

As stated in 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.”

A8. Is this grant program (EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-03) related to this FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Issues Final Rule to Replace Lead Pipes Within a Decade, Announces New Funding to Deliver Clean Drinking Water?

The full announcement for the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water NOFO is available at [WIIN Grant: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water](#) . The full announcement and application package is available on Grants.gov. You can search Grants.gov by the Funding Opportunity Number EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-03 or Assistance Listing 66.443. Section IV, Application and Submission Information. of the NOFO provides further application and submission information.

A9. Has this grant closed?

The full announcement for the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water NOFO is available at [WIIN Grant: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water](#) . The full announcement and application package is available on Grants.gov. You can search Grants.gov by the Funding Opportunity Number EPA-OW-OGWDW-24-03 or Assistance Listing 66.443. Section IV, Application and Submission Information. The current deadline for applications is December 30, 2024 at 11:59pm Eastern Time.

Eligibility Questions

B1. Partial LSL replacement: can partial line replacement of the privately-owned portion of the line be the only thing that is replaced?

Section I.B. of the NOFO it states that “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.” See also 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.”

Section III.C, Threshold Eligibility Criteria states “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.”

B2. Can you please confirm if special district governments are eligible for this program?

Under Section III.A., eligible applicants under this competition include the following:

- Community water systems
- Water systems located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe
- Non-transient non-community water systems
- Qualified nonprofit organizations servicing a public water system
- Municipalities
- State, interstate, or intermunicipal agencies
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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.

A “municipality,” as defined in Section 1401(10) of the SDWA, means a city, town, or other public body created by or pursuant to State law, or an Indian Tribe.

Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. Additional provisions can be found at the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

B3. Is replacing lead service lines on private property an eligible activity under the NOFO?

Section I.B National Priority Area One states “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.”

“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.”

B4. Is it a requirement for there to be at least one level of exceedance to submit an application?

Section V.A of the NOFO, states for evaluation factor 1. National Priority Area: 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 the announcement. In conducting this evaluation, the following factors will be evaluated:

- 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.

Lead level exceedance is not a threshold criteria, but it will be evaluated in the application.

B5. Portions of our community are disadvantaged according to EPA’s Disadvantaged Community Environmental and Climate Justice Program Map we have not exceeded the 90th percentile limit for lead, but during this sampling, we do have customers with relative high levels of lead in their water. The community has census tracts within its service area that meet the disadvantaged community criteria. However, the service area of the water system

includes census tracts that are not classified as disadvantaged communities. Are we eligible to apply?

As explained in Section I.A. of the NOFO, 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.

Section III.C, Threshold Eligibility Criteria states: “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.”

Under National Priority Area One in Section I.B. of the NOFO, 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.

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.

B7. Do water authorities count as water systems?

As described in Section I.B. of the NOFO, 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.

Under Section III.A., eligible applicants under this competition include the following:

- Community water systems
- Water systems located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe
- Non-transient non-community water systems
- Qualified nonprofit organizations servicing a public water system
- Municipalities
- State, interstate, or intermunicipal agencies

The term "municipality" is defined in Section 1401(10) of the SDWA as a city, town, or other public body created by or pursuant to State law, or an Indian Tribe.

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

B8. I am writing to inquire on if our program is eligible for this grant under the SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECTS since our program only replaces lead, brass, and galvanized iron on the private side of a resident's water service line, if the public side of the water service line has already been replaced by the city? Replacing the private side only will ensure "that no section of lead service line remains in place". The city has been replacing the public side of the lead water service line since it learned that changes

in water treatment chemicals resulted in the corrosion of pipes underground, exposing thousands to lead contamination. The city's contractors will replace the pipes on private property at the same time if the property owner is willing to pay the replacement cost which they often cannot afford to do.

Section I.B National Priority Area One states "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."

"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.”

B9. I am asking if a city’s Water Utility can directly apply for a WIIN grant, or only a state?

Section III.A states that eligible applicants under this competition include the following:

- Community water systems
- Water systems located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe
- Non-transient non-community water systems
- Qualified nonprofit organizations servicing a public water system
- Municipalities
- State, interstate, or intermunicipal agencies

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

A “municipality,” as defined in Section 1401(10) of the SDWA, means a city, town, or other public body created by or pursuant to State law, or an Indian Tribe.

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

National Priority Area One

C2. Can a water system apply to fund a portion of its overall distribution system (e.g. 4,000 service lines)?

In Section I.B. of the NOFO, it states that 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.

National Priority Area 2

D1. Are public-school districts eligible to apply to the NOFO? If public school districts are not eligible to apply, who is able to apply on behalf of public schools and childcare facilities?

Section III.A, Eligible Applicants states “Eligible applicants under this competition include the following:

- Community water systems
- Water systems located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe
- Non-transient non-community water systems
- Qualified nonprofit organizations servicing a public water system
- Municipalities
- State, interstate, or intermunicipal agencies

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.

A “municipality,” as defined in Section 1401(10) of the SDWA, means a city, town, or other public body created by or pursuant to State law, or an Indian Tribe.

An eligible applicant may apply to the NOFO for eligible activities to reduce lead in drinking water in schools and childcare facilities in at least one disadvantaged community (See also Section I.B., National Priority Area 2).

D2. As a nonprofit school and legally exempt childcare that would like to apply to perform lead reducing projects in our facility do we qualify as a qualified nonprofit organization servicing a public water system?

Section III.A, Eligible Applicants states “Eligible applicants under this competition include the following:

- Community water systems
- Water systems located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe
- Non-transient non-community water systems
- Qualified nonprofit organizations servicing a public water system¹

- Municipalities
- State, interstate, or intermunicipal agencies

An eligible applicant may apply to the NOFO for eligible activities to reduce lead in drinking water in schools and childcare facilities in at least one disadvantaged community (See also Section I.B., National Priority Area 2).

Per Section 1459B(a)(1)(D) of the SDWA, qualified non-profits must have experience with lead reduction and must be servicing a public water system.

1 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.

D3. Is a school district eligible to apply for a WIIN Drinking Water Grant? If school district is not eligible to apply, could we partner with a Public Utilities Commission to apply?

Section III.A, Eligible Applicants states “Eligible applicants under this competition include the following:

- Community water systems
- Water systems located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe
- Non-transient non-community water systems
- Qualified nonprofit organizations servicing a public water system
- Municipalities
- State, interstate, or intermunicipal agencies

An eligible applicant may apply to the NOFO for eligible activities to reduce lead in drinking water in schools and childcare facilities in at least one disadvantaged community (See also Section I.B., National Priority Area 2).

Also note, if you name sub-awardees/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>. If you partner with an eligible applicant, the eligible applicant, if selected and awarded funds, is the grantee.

D4. Can funding under this NOFO be used to support lead reduction activities and initial sampling and testing in middle schools and high schools? Are identifying locations, fixture type, sample/test for lead levels, and identify fixtures with elevated lead eligible activities?

Section I.B. of the NOFO it states “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." See the Objectives for NPA 2, for example, and examples of eligible projects.

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).
- 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.

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.

Section III.C., Threshold Eligibility Criteria also states "Applications that primarily address planning, training, and technical assistance will not be eligible for funding."

General Project-Related Questions

E1. The NOFO states that a cost share is not required. Any costs exceeding the maximum award amount (in this case \$10,000,000) will be considered a voluntary match. Can the total project cost exceed \$10,000,000?

Section III.C., Threshold Eligibility Criteria states "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." Section III.B, Cost Sharing or Matching states "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.”

E2. Is there a date when the proposed projects need to start by? Is there a date that they need to be completed by?

See Section I.C. Expeditious Project Readiness to Proceed, “Applications for projects under both NPAs 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.**”

Additionally, under Section II.A. It states for both NPAs that the **project period is anticipated to be up to four years.** Section VI.A. Award Notifications states “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.”

Section IV.E.2.c.iv. Milestone Schedule states “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.”

E3. I am reaching out with a question regarding the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grant Program. We are interested in pursuing funding under this program to replace galvanized pipes downstream of a lead service line. One question we have regarding this program is if the program has a required method to identify project locations. We anticipate utilizing predictive modeling to identify locations of work under this program. Will predictive modeling be allowed as a methodology in identifying project locations or will any proposed project be required to provide on the ground confirmation of any potential project area?

As stated in Section I.B. National Priority Areas (NPA), under NPA One, 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.

Also see Section V.A. Evaluation Criteria of the NOFO for how eligible applications will be evaluated:

1) National Priority Area

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:

- i. The extent and quality of the overall approach to addressing the National Priority Area that is the subject of the application.
- ii. The extent and quality to which the applicant describes a known lead issue in the disadvantaged community.
- 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.
- iv. The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates plans to maintain lead reduction after project completion.
- 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.

E4. What are the funding stipulations for removing lead from drinking water. Will funding only be awarded after the utility proves that the lead is removed? Or will funding be awarded in advance to fund the removal of the lead pipes? If, for some reason, lead is still present after the full pipe replacement, what are the consequences?

See Section VI. Award Administration Information:

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.

See the [General Terms and Conditions](#) effective October 1, 2024. [EPA Grants](#) also has training resources, guidance, and resources on what to expect if the application is selected for award.

E5. Is receipt of the grant money conditional on anything other than winning the award and completing the plumbing work? Is water quality testing required before or after the plumbing work? If water quality testing is required, can the grant money be revoked based on the test outcome? If the test outcome is unsatisfactory, is there a cure period? Is the grant money provided before, or after, the plumbing work is performed? What verification is required to confirm the plumbing work was performed as expected?

See Section VI. Award Administration Information:

Award Notifications

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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.

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