# NOTES ON THE FY25 OPTIONAL COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

* *Note:* This is an optional template available to FY25 applicants to assist in the drafting of their submitted cover letter, which is a mandatory attachment for all submitted proposals (see SN Appendix E). However, the use of this template is not required.
* *Note:* The cover letter should be one page (and no more than two pages maximum).
* *Note:* The cover letter may be looked at by reviewers for scoring.
* *Note:* Blue text enclosed in brackets signifies sections of text that should be edited and/or expanded upon by the applicant; change this text color to black and remove brackets before submitting the cover letter.
  + *Example:* ‘I am pleased to submit the [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency]’s application for a [‘grant’ or ‘cooperative agreement’]…’ 🡪 ‘I am pleased to submit the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality’s application for a grant…’
* *Note:* Superscript numbers throughout this document link to helpful endnotes (see document page 3); to delete these, simply remove the associated superscript number (e.g., 1).
  + *Note:* Delete this introductory page, all superscript, and all endnotes before submitting your cover letter. The final cover letter should only include the information listed on the second page of this document.

**THE OPTIONAL COVER LETTER TEMPLATE BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE**

**DELETE THIS PAGE BEFORE SUBMISSION**

[Insert Organizational Letterhead]

[Date]

Erin McGown

EN Grants Program Manager - OIM/IED/DIPB

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Mission Support

1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20460

Dear Ms. McGown:

I am pleased to submit the [State, Tribe, or Territory Name] [Name of Department or Agency]’s application for a [‘grant’ or ‘cooperative agreement’], entitled [‘project name’], under the FY 2025 Exchange Network Grant Program. This application is seeking $[dollar amount of funds] in direct grants funding and $[dollar amount of funds] as in-kind[[1]](#endnote-2) support. We have [‘no’ or number of partners] formal partners in this grant application and [‘are’ or ‘are not’] utilizing a formal mentor[[2]](#endnote-3). [Our partners are: name partnering organization(s)]. [Our mentor is: name mentoring organization]. This project [‘is’ or ‘is not’] charging indirect costs [‘at a rate of [%]’ or ‘using the de minimus rate of 15%’]. [The associated Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement[[3]](#endnote-4) is active until [insert date: mm/dd/yyyy]]. This project [‘is’ or ‘is not’] charging contractual costs [for use of a[n] ‘contracting firm’ or ‘individual consultant’ or ‘vendor firm’]. [The method of procurement is [‘sealed bid’, ‘request for proposals’, or ‘non-competitive procurement’][[4]](#endnote-5)]. We [‘are’ or ‘are not’] requesting that, if successful, this application be awarded as part of a Performance Partnership Grant (PPG)[[5]](#endnote-6). [The applicable PPG number is: PPG grant number].

This application [‘is’ or ‘is not’] applying under specific EN project opportunit(ies)[[6]](#endnote-7) as listed in Appendices A-C of the FY25 Exchange Network Solicitation Notice, including: [list EN project opportunit(ies)].

This project aims to [provide a short narrative description of project, including a statement of project goal(s)].

The contact for this grant application is:

[Name and Title of Project Lead]

[Name of Office or Division]

[Name of Department or Agency]

[Full Mailing Address]

[Phone Number(s)]

[Email address]

If there are any questions, please feel free to call either myself or the contact named in this letter.

Sincerely,

[Signature of Authorized Organizational Representative]

[Name/Title of Authorized Organizational Representative]

# Endnotes

1. In-kind support refers to funds that will be used to provide in-kind services to the recipient through an EPA contract vehicle (aka, a portion or all awarded grant funds will be added to an EPA contract (to complete project goals and outputs), as opposed to being distributed to the grantee). These services are managed by EPA. Applicants should only request in-kind if they have verified contract availability with an EPA POC (see SN Section 1E); however, EPA ultimately reserves the right to decide whether in-kind services will be provided when requested. See SN Section 3D for more information. Applicants should state ‘$0 in in-kind support’, if in-kind is not applicable to the project.

   *Note:* The term ‘in-kind’ is commonly confused with voluntary cost share (in which, the applicant commits to providing their own organizational funding in support of the project, in addition to awarded federal funds). Cost shares are not applicable to EN Grants and, therefore, nonfederal funds should not be included in proposed projects. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Formal mentors are only applicable to tribal or territorial applicants that are specifically applying under the project opportunity ‘Individual Capacity Building with Mentorship’ in the FY25 EN Solicitation Notice’s Appendix C. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. Applicants charging indirect costs must include their current indirect cost rate agreement in their application package, valid at least through 9/30/2026. Applicants without a current indirect cost rate agreement may elect to charge indirect costs at a 15% de minimus rate (see [Solicitation Notice](https://www.epa.gov/exchangenetwork/exchange-network-grant-program#SN) ‘Appendix E: Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate’ for more information). Tribal applicants may also charge indirect costs using their draft rate as submitted to the Department of Interior (DOI), draft agreements should be included in the submitted application if this is applicable to the project. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. Non-competitive procurement is not allowable without EPA approval, which is provided only in select cases. Applicants must provide a detailed justification in their project narrative and their budget narrative attachment form when using this procurement method; see [2 CFR 200.320(c).](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d#p-200.320(c)) An existing relationship or a history of prior work completed by a contractor, consultant, or vendor does not justify the use of non-competitive procurement. Similarly, proximity of a contracting firm to an applicant’s organization is not sufficient reasoning. One example of a valid non-competitive procurement rationale is that software required for the proposed project is proprietary and developed by the contractor; therefore, the item is available only from a single source. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. US territories may apply for a similar award vehicle called a ‘Consolidated Grant’ or ‘CG’; if applicable, please replace the phrase ‘Performance Partnership Grant’ with ‘Consolidated Grant’. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. ‘Project opportunity’ in this context refers to specific project write-ups as provided in Appendices A-C of the FY25 EN Solicitation Notice (e.g., ‘WQX’ or ‘Individual Capacity Building’). Applicants can apply under one or multiple project opportunities or propose projects that do not have a specific project opportunity write-up, as long as this is explicitly stated and the project supports one or more EN Funding Opportunities (see SN Section 3A).

   **DELETE THIS PAGE BEFORE SUBMISSION** [↑](#endnote-ref-7)