EPA Grants Competition Process Webinar
December 17, 2025
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1: Where can I subscribe to the EPA Grants Update Listserv?

    A1: To sign up for the EPA Grants Update Listserv, visit the [Listserv webpage](#), and select the button that says "Subscribe." Enter your email address and you will be set to receive news and updates from the EPA.

Q2: Can you show step-by-step instructions on how to register your organization in SAM.gov for new applicants?

    A2: The instructions to register with SAM.gov can be found on the [How to Register to Apply for Grants webpage](#). Review Step 1 for detailed guidance.

Q3: What is the link to the training for applicants and recipients?

    A3: The training is available on the [Grants Management Training for Applicants and Recipients webpage](#).

Q4: Will the EPA be discussing any program timelines for grant programs for transportation projects in 2025, such as the EPA Clean School Bus Program?

    A4: You can find a list of upcoming Clean School Bus Program events and webinars on the [Clean School Bus Webinar webpage](#).

Q5: Is the original [Grants.gov](#) search still available to use? Or does it only redirect to [simpler.grants.gov](#)?

    A5: Grants.gov has been offering both options for some time. However, it appears to have been transitioned to be redirected only to the [simpler.grants.gov search page](#).

Q6: How is the Federal Program Inventory (FPI) different from USAspending?

    A6: FPI centralizes information about federally funded programs such as what each program does and how it helps the agency achieve its broader goals and objectives. FPI is designed to help facilitate coordination across programs as well as improve public understanding of the services delivered by the government. USASpending provides federal spending information, including information about federal awards. USASpending offers information about recipients of federally funded programs and provides details based on location, industry, and more. Both are seeking to improve public understanding of the services delivered by the government.

Q7: Do SAM.gov login accounts need to be tied to our organization, or can they be personal accounts? For example, if I work for a state, do I need a state-affiliated login?

    A7: Accounts should be affiliated with the applicant organization.

Q8: How do we know the EBiz point of contact?

    A8: If you already have a SAM.gov registration and you are not sure who your Ebiz point of contact is, you can go on SAM.gov and look up your registration. If you know your

unique entity identifier (UEI), search using that number. When your entity record appears, open the registration details and you will see the Ebiz point of contact listed.

Q9:   I am not seeing any open EPA opportunities on Grants.gov, and my search redirects me to simpler.grants.gov. Is that correct?

A9:   There are open opportunities on Grants.gov for the EPA, and it is now redirecting to simpler.grants.gov for searches. Visit the Grants.gov Support Center webpage for assistance.

Q10:   What's the difference between SAM.gov and Grants.gov?

A10:   SAM.gov is the official system to register to do business with the government. Grants.gov is the system to apply for federal grants.

Q11:   What steps does a grantee have to take to indicate a sub-awardee for a grant application?

A11:   Applicants will submit a project narrative to describe the proposed activities as part of the grant application. Applicants can describe their intent to make a subaward within the project narrative. Each funding announcement will describe project narrative requirements.

Q12:   Can you provide the link to Appendix I to Part 200?

A12:   Appendix I is available on the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) webpage.

Q13:   If cost share is not required, is it advantageous to offer it anyway?

A13:   Providing more resources to an application can provide the opportunity to propose more activities, presumably leading to enhanced results. Cost-effectiveness and results are evaluated as part of each funding opportunity and are described in Section 6 of each Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

Q14:   Is there a subscription or mailing list we can join to receive notifications when the CFR or Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines are updated?

A14:   To subscribe to updates in eCFR, you will need a Federal Register account. This account is shared between FederalRegister.gov and eCFR.gov. On any eCFR page, you can start by clicking the 'Sign Up' link. FederalRegister.gov has reader aids to help navigate the site, including one for managing subscriptions.

Q15:   If an applicant has two proposals for the same NOFO, is it best to combine them, compete against one another, or only submit one?

A15:   Whether the applicant should combine the two proposals, submit them separately, or submit only one depends on the requirements of the specific NOFO. Some NOFOs allow only one application per organization; in that situation, the applicant is limited to a single submission and must decide whether to combine the projects or move forward with only one.

        If multiple submissions are permitted, the decision should be based on the funding structure. If the two projects cannot be completed within the maximum award amount, they should not be combined. If they can, then the applicant should consider how many awards the program expects to make. When only one award is planned, a combined

proposal may be stronger. When multiple awards are anticipated, submitting the projects separately can be advantageous, since program offices often select proposals they can fully fund.

In short, the appropriate approach is determined by the NOFO's submission limits, the available funding, and the number of expected awards.

Q16:   After evaluation, is an applicant able to request their scoring results and scoring comments as part of a requested debriefing?

A16:   Debriefings will not include detailed scoring breakdowns or verbatim reviewer comments. Instead, you will receive a summary that highlights the strongest and weakest areas of your application to make the debriefing as useful as possible. You may request your scores, but you will not be able to see other applicants' scores.

Q17:   Are funding terms and conditions subject to negotiation, or are they top-down requirements? Can you give an example of a condition?

A17:   The EPA's [General Terms and Conditions](#) for grants are published online. Federal assistance recipients must comply with the terms and conditions. If the recipient disagrees with the terms and conditions specified in the award, the authorized representative of the recipient must furnish a notice of disagreement to the EPA Award Official within 21 days after the EPA award or amendment mailing date.

Q18:   If a NOFO is updated to the point of an added extension, but you have already submitted an application, are you typically required to update your application?

A18:   If a NOFO is updated to add an extension after you have already submitted your application, you are not required to update or resubmit it. If the update includes changes to the requirements, it may be beneficial to revise your application, as necessary.

Q19:   Does the EPA anticipate providing any Clean School Bus updates in the near future?

A19:   To receive updates about the Clean School Bus program, you may sign up for their listservs on the [Clean School Bus subscription webpage](#).

Q20:   Do you have any insight into a NOFO release schedule for 2026? I'm wondering about upcoming EPA grant opportunities, including those that have not yet been released.

A20:   We do not have any information to share about NOFOs that will be published in 2026. However, if you subscribe to notifications on Grants.gov, you will receive email alerts as new NOFOs are posted.

Q21:   If we do not have an EBiz point of contact, is it too late to get one for a January 28, 2026 deadline?

A21:   If you already have a UEI but do not have the full SAM.gov account, you should contact SAM.gov or visit their website for instructions on completing your registration and establishing an EBiz point of contact. If you do not have an account at all, you should begin the process now. With less than six weeks until the deadline, it is possible to complete the registration in that timeframe, but it cannot be guaranteed since it depends on the processing schedule.

Q22: Should the cost share waiver be submitted at the point of application, or should it be submitted after?

A22: This question should be directed to the point of contact listed in the NOFO, as it depends on the grant program.

Q23: Are indirect costs generally allowable?

A23: Yes.

Q24: What is the SAM.gov registration deadline? If the deadline is missed, what are the implications for applying to EPA grants in 2026?

A24: The renewal deadline is annual based on the date your registration was first initiated. For example, if you register on January 1, 2026, your renewal deadline will be December 31, 2026. If you miss the renewal deadline, you will need to reactivate your SAM.gov prior to applying in Grants.gov. SAM.gov recommends initiating registration renewal 60 days prior to expiration.

Q25: When should you apply for a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)? After receiving an award letter or before?

A25: Organizations should negotiate an indirect cost agreement before receiving an award if they plan to use a rate higher than the 15% de minimis rate of the modified total direct costs.

Q26: Are consultants and Consortia required to show an agreement signed by the Tribal village before submitting an application in response to NOFO?

A26: These details and the eligibility requirements, including any required documentation, are outlined in the NOFO.

Q27: How long does it take for an EPA grant application decision to be made?

A27: Each program follows its own timeline, and those timelines should be identified in the NOFO. The NOFO will state when selections are expected and when awards are anticipated. The actual timeframe depends on the size of the competition and how many staff are available to review and process the applications. Generally, the EPA expects awards to be made within about nine months. Some competitions take less time if they are smaller, and larger competitions may take the full nine months.

Q28: How long does it take for a staff member from a registered local government to be approved in SAM.gov?

A28: Once you have completely and accurately entered all of the information in SAM.gov, new registrations can take an average of **10-15 business** days to process. SAM.gov must send out some information for validation with outside parties before your registration can be activated; this includes Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) validation with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Commercial and Government Entity Code (CAGE) validation/assignment with the Department of Defense.

This time frame may be longer if the information you provide is flagged for manual validation by either party. You will receive an email alerting you when your registration is active.

If you notice your registration has had a status of 'submitted' for longer than 14 days, and you have not otherwise been contacted to correct or update the information, please contact the Federal Service Desk.

Q29:   Is there guidance on using artificial intelligence when applying for an EPA grant?

A29:   There is no guidance on using artificial intelligence when applying for an EPA grant.

Q30:   If multiple organizations will be working together and using the same funding, would each need to be registered with SAM.gov?

A30:   Whether multiple organizations need to be registered in SAM.gov depends on how the NOFO defines their roles. In some competitions, the NOFO may require the prime recipient and all participating organizations to be registered in SAM.gov. In those cases, every organization involved must be registered.

However, if the organizations are subawardees, the requirements are different. Subawardees need a UEI, but they generally do not need a full SAM.gov registration. The specific requirement depends on how the project is structured and what the NOFO states. Reviewing the NOFO carefully will clarify whether each organization must have a SAM.gov registration.

Q31:   You said you cannot share any information on who is applying; however, are you able to share who or what projects have been awarded in the past?

A31:   Some programs publish information about past award recipients on their websites so that future applicants can see examples of projects that have been successful. Additionally, the assistance listings include a section highlighting previously funded projects.

Q32:   What is the budget training that recipients are required to take?

A32:   The How to Develop a Budget course is available on the EPA website.

Q33:   How long is an application open for?

A33:   Refer to the NOFO for specific open periods. EPA NOFOs are typically open for a minimum of 45 calendar days and often are open longer.

Q34:   Will a recording of this webinar be sent to us? Will the presentation be shared with us?

A34:   The webinar presentation is available for download from the Competition Process Webinar webpage. The webinar recording will also be available on the same webpage.

Q35:   Are there any significant changes you foresee next year that you know of in regard to EPA grants/NOFOs?

A35:   The EPA, along with other federal agencies, is working to make NOFOs more accessible and easier to understand. As we continue improving how we simplify and organize NOFOs, you may see additional changes designed to make the information more useful for applicants.