

**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

Applications Due: **Monday, April 6, 2026**



**Region 5**

# Region 5 Fiscal Year 2025 Wetland Program Development Grants

Funding Opportunity Number: **EPA-REG5-WPDG-25**



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# 1. Basic Information

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Region 5

### Region 5 Fiscal Year 2025 Wetland Program Development Grants

#### A. Executive Summary

Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) assist state, Tribal, territory (Insular Areas), local government agencies, and interstate or intertribal entities in developing or refining state, Tribal, territory or local programs that protect, manage and restore wetlands. The goals of the EPA's wetland program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. In pursuing these goals, the EPA seeks to develop the capacity of all levels of government to develop and/or refine effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management. This is done using the Core Elements of a Wetlands Program, the Wetlands Program Core Elements Framework and for states and Tribes the development of Wetland Program Plans (WPP).

#### C. Key Dates:

<b>March 2, 2026</b>	Question Submission Deadline
April 6, 2026 11:59 pm ET	Application Submission Deadline
April 6, 2026 10:59 pm CT	Application Submission Deadline (Local Time)
May 2026	Anticipated Notification of Selection
May 2026	Anticipated Award Notification

#### D. Funding Details:

It is anticipated that up to **20** will be made under this announcement. The amount of funding is expected to be **between \$1,481,000 - \$2,962,000**, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. Awards funded under this opportunity are expected to have **one to four but not more than five-year** project period.

#### E. Agency Contact Information:

Further information, if needed, may be obtained from the EPA contact(s) indicated below.

Technical Contact:

**Nicki Deweese, (312) 886-5734, deweese.nichole**

#### B. Key Information:

**Opportunity Number:**

**EPA-REG5-WPDG-25**

**Assistance Listing:**

66.461

**Announcement Type:**

Initial

**Funding Available:**

\$2,962,000

**Number of Awards:**

15-20

Eligibility Contact:	<b>Nicki Deweese, (312) 886-5734, <a href="mailto:deweese.nichole">deweese.nichole</a></b>
Electronic Submissions Contact:	<b>Dertera Collins, (312) 353-6291, <a href="mailto:collins.dertera@epa.gov">collins.dertera@epa.gov</a></b>
<b>Regional Contact:</b>	<b>Dertera Collins, (312) 353-6291, <a href="mailto:collins.dertera@epa.gov">collins.dertera@epa.gov</a></b>

## **F. Other Funding Considerations**

Up to \$2,962,000 may be awarded under this NOFO over approximately one to four years, consisting of incremental funding of about \$1,481,000 per year for two years, contingent on the quality of applications received, funding availability, future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. Funding each year is not guaranteed. The application should include an annualized budget and budget detail narrative for the project, and a detailed workplan covering each year of the project broken down by task.

Under this announcement, EPA will have two separate applicant tracks with state, Tribal, and territory governments in Track One: WPP or Track Two: Non-WPP, and local governments, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia, and colleges and universities that are agencies of a state government in Track Two: Non-WPP. EPA anticipates awarding approximately \$1,962,000 in federal funds under Track One: WPP and approximately \$1,000,000 in federal funds under Track Two: Non-WPP.

EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If 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 was evaluated and selected for award to maintain the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including to zero) the total number of awards and dollar amounts for each track or change the ratio of Track One: WPP to Track Two: Non-WPP assistance agreements it awards. Such changes may be necessary as a response to the quality of applications received by EPA, the amount of funds awarded to the selected applicants, or budget availability.

Selection or award of funding under this NOFO is not a guarantee of future funding. EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

## **2. Eligibility**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Only these types of organizations may apply:

- [Indian Tribe](#).
- [State & Local Governments](#).
- [Institutions of Higher Education \(IHEs\)](#).
- [Interstate agencies](#).
- [Intertribal consortia](#).

As described in Assistance Listing number ([66.461](#)) in the “Eligibility” section, this includes state agencies; any agency or instrumentality of local government; interstate agencies; federally recognized Tribes and intertribal consortia; colleges and universities that are agencies of a state. “For profit” organizations, federal agencies, and individuals are not eligible applicants.

## **(1) Other Eligibility Requirements**

Applications must meet the following threshold criteria and those found in Section 6.A to be considered eligible:

1. Applications must include activities taking place within states, Tribes and territories within EPA Region 5 (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin) and Tribal lands located within those states. Inter-jurisdictional watershed projects must primarily be conducted in EPA Region 5.
2. All applications submitted under this Notice of Funding Opportunity, regardless of track, must be for projects that develop or refine state, Tribal, territory or local government wetland programs. All applicants must demonstrate in their application how the proposed project will develop or refine a state, Tribal, territory or local government wetland program according to the requirements of the track the application falls under. The two tracks are described below and further in Section 3.A: Track Concept.
  - Track One: WPP Applicants must demonstrate 1) how they will develop/update a Wetland Program Plan, or 2) reference one or more grant-eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan they plan to undertake as part of the proposed project.
  - Track Two: Non-WPP Applicants must demonstrate 1) which objectives and associated action(s) from [Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions](#) their application is developing or refining, or 2) if the applicant is an interstate agency or intertribal consortia, by referencing one or more grant-eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan they plan to undertake as part of the proposed project.
3. Applications must not request more than \$500,000.
4. Applicants may submit more than one application under this announcement under the applicable tracks. Each application must be separately submitted and be for a different project. Applications will be evaluated separately.
5. In addition, **state, Tribal and territorial government** applicants may submit separate applications for different projects under Track One: WPP or Track Two: Non-WPP. **Local governments, interstate organization and intertribal consortia** can only apply under Track Two: Non-WPP. Each application must be submitted under either *Track One: WPP* or *Track Two: Non-WPP*.
6. Applicants cannot submit one application covering both tracks. If an applicant indicates that an application covers both tracks, the application will be rejected. If an applicant submits an application under the wrong track, the EPA will determine the most appropriate track in which to evaluate the application.

7. All applications submitted under this Notice of Funding Opportunity must conduct or promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction and elimination of water pollution as described in Section 3.C: Statutory Authority, of this announcement.
8. **Demonstration projects** must involve new or experimental technologies, methods or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, is not a demonstration and all or parts of the application will be eliminated from consideration. Such projects are implementation projects and are not eligible for funding under this announcement. Individual project tasks that are for program implementation are not eligible for funding. Only education and training on restoration or restoration involving new, experimental or demonstrative methods are eligible. (See also Section 4.B.3 on limitations for demonstration projects).
9. The lease of vehicles is eligible for funding under this program but must be described in the budget detail and linked to project activities.

#### **Ineligible Activities**

If an application is submitted with ineligible tasks, 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. Below is a list of ineligible tasks.

1. Wetland program **implementation projects are not eligible** for funding under this announcement. An implementation project is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge. However worthwhile the implementation project might be, such a project is not considered a demonstration project, which is eligible.
2. Fundraising, honorarium or the purchase of land or conservation easements are ineligible.
3. Application project tasks that are required by a previous or pending permit, e.g., CWA Section 404 permit, CWA Section 402 permit, CWA Section 401 certification, or federal, state, Tribal or local government regulatory requirement(s) are **not** eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks.
4. Wetland restoration training projects cannot include wetlands constructed only for the purposes of treating wastewater or stormwater.

5. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. Applications that carry out studies that may be part of an in-lieu-fee program/instrument are eligible for funding, but the actual creation of an in-lieu-fee instrument is not eligible for funding.
6. Purchase of vehicles (e.g., cars, boats, motor homes, etc.) and office furniture are **not** eligible for funding under this program.
7. Restoration of wetlands through conventional methods is ineligible.

Please see [Section 6](#) for additional threshold criteria.

## B. Cost Sharing

Applicants must demonstrate in their proposal how it will meet the cost share requirement, **a minimum of 25 percent of the total project cost**, to be considered eligible. Selected recipients must comply with [2 CFR 200.306](#) when meeting a cost share requirement.

The cost share must be for allowable costs and may be provided by the applicant, by the applicant's subrecipient or other third parties. The cost share may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions often include salaries, equipment 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.

If the cost share is provided by a subrecipient, the subrecipient's contribution must comply with [2 CFR 200.306](#). Any indirect costs included in the subrecipients' cost share contribution must be determined consistently with [2 CFR 200.332\(b\)\(4\)](#). Successful applicants are still responsible for proper accounting and documentation of cost share contributions. Other federal grants may not be used as cost share without specific statutory authority. All grant funds are subject to a federal audit.

The total project cost is the sum of the total requested federal share and applicant cost share. The minimum cost share is determined by dividing the total project cost by four as illustrated by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost} (\$)}{4} = \text{minimum cost share} (\$)$$

For example, if the total project cost (sum of federal and non-federal funds) is \$100,000, the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match.

**OR**

$$\frac{\text{Total Federal Funds Requested} (\$)}{3} = \text{minimum cost share} (\$)$$

For example, if the total federal funds requested are \$75,000, the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share.

A cost share/match calculator can be found at the [WPDG website](#) at [Cost Share Calculator](#).

Click or tap here to enter text.

### **(1) Performance Partnership Grants**

Funds for a grant awarded under this opportunity may be included in a PPG. Applicants should indicate in their application submission if they anticipate incorporating the proposed project, if selected for funding, into an already existing PPG or if they intend to create a new PPG that would include the project proposed under this funding opportunity.

For further information regarding cost share requirements for awards included in PPG, see the final rules on Environmental Program Grants for state and interstate agencies at [40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A](#) and Tribes and Intertribal Consortia at [40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B](#). Local governments are not eligible for PPGs.

### **(2) Tribal Match Clause for PPG-eligible Programs**

#### **NO REQUIRED TRIBAL COST SHARE UNDER A PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANT (PPG)**

If a Tribe or intertribal consortium includes the funds for a grant awarded under this NOFO in an approved Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), there is no cost-share requirement. If the applicant plans to include their grant in a PPG, the applicant should:

- Prepare a budget and proposed work-plan based upon the assumption that the EPA will approve the budget and work plan without cost share included.
- Be aware that if the grant awarded under this NOFO is not included in a PPG the Tribe or intertribal consortium must meet the applicable cost share requirements identified in Section 2.B. The federal award amount will be reduced by the required cost share amount and the total project cost will remain the same.

## **3. Program Description**

### **A. Purpose, Priorities, and Activities**

#### Program Purpose

The goals of the EPA's wetland program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. In pursuing these goals, as indicated in Assistance Listing 66.461, the EPA seeks to develop the capacity of all levels of government to develop and/or refine effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management.

Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. For this grant program, the term *wetlands* generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas as described in [Cowardin et al. 1979](#).

WPDGs provide states, Tribes, territories, interstate agencies, intratribal consortia, local governments and universities that are agencies of a state (hereafter referred to as applicants or recipients) an opportunity to develop and/or refine comprehensive state, Tribal, territory and to a lesser extent local government wetland programs. These programs are meant to:

- Develop the capacity of states, Tribes and territories to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition.
- Use one or more actions from [\*Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions\*](#) to achieve this goal.

[\*Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions\*](#) provides objectives and program development and refinement actions that are eligible for WPDG funding.

**Wetland mapping and monitoring** projects are eligible for funding under this announcement as they are considered studies or investigations that develop or refine state, Tribal, territory or local government programs to research, investigate, experiment, train, demonstrate, survey and study the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction and elimination of water pollution. Mapping projects are required to meet the Federal Geographic Data Committee Wetlands Mapping Standards (see Section 4.E.3).

Proposed projects must comply with all state, Tribal, territory, local and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

#### Program Priority

The EPA has found that long-term wetland planning (e.g., Wetland Program Plans) helps states, Tribes and territories develop their wetland programs more effectively and efficiently; therefore, the EPA is emphasizing Wetland Program Plans as a national priority.

#### **Track Concept**

Under this announcement, the EPA will have two separate applicant tracks for eligible applicants.

1. **States, Tribes and territories** can apply under *Track One: WPP* or *Track Two: Non-WPP*.
2. **Interstate agencies, Intertribal consortia, local governments and colleges and universities that are agencies of a state** can **only** apply under *Track Two: Non-WPP*.

*Track One: WPP*-eligible-applicants will only be ranked against other *Track One: WPP*-eligible applicants.

*Track Two: Non-WPP*-eligible applicants will only be ranked against other *Track Two: Non-WPP*-eligible applicants. See Section 6.B for further information.

#### **Track One: WPPs (state, Tribal or territory applicants only)**

Under Track One: WPP - states, Tribes and territories must submit applications for either 1) carrying out grant-eligible actions from a current EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan **or** 2) developing or updating

a Wetland Program Plan (and, if they so choose, also carrying out actions that develop or refine a wetland program described in [Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions](#)). If a state, Tribe or territory submits any other type of application (e.g., not having a Wetland Program Plan, having an expired Wetland Program Plan), they will automatically be included and evaluated under *Track Two: Non-WPP* as long as the application meets the threshold eligibility requirements delineated in Sections 2 and 6.

**Wetland Program Plans.** Wetland Program Plans are voluntary plans developed by state, Tribal or territorial agencies that articulate what the state, Tribe or territory wants to accomplish with their wetland programs over time. Wetland Program Plans describe overall program goals along with broad-based actions and more specific activities that will help achieve the goals. Timelines for plans vary between three to six years, with more specific timeframes typically associated with the plan's actions/activities.

Wetland Program Plans should include the following five minimum components:

1. An overall goal statement(s) for the program over the period covered by the Wetland Program Plan.
2. An overall timeframe for the plan, with a minimum timeframe of three years starting from the time of the Wetland Program Plan submittal to the EPA.
3. A list of planned actions that the program intends to carry out over the Wetland Program Plan's timeframe which, if collectively met, will accomplish the overall Wetland Program Plan goal(s). Suggested actions can be found in the Core Elements Framework.
4. An intended schedule for the achievement of each action.
5. A listing of more specific activities to be accomplished under each action.

Wetland Program Plans do not need to be elaborate documents. An effective Wetland Program Plan may be a concise list of planned actions to help create a focused and sustainable wetland program. A Wetland Program Plan can refer to both wetland program implementation and program development efforts planned for the upcoming three to six years. Please note, however, that program implementation efforts are **not** eligible for WPDG funding. Wetland Program Plans should also include any actions the state, Tribe or territory anticipates funding through sources other than WPDGs. Wetland Program Plans are approved by the EPA in a process that is independent of the WPDG application process. The EPA-approved state, Tribal or territory Wetland Program Plans can be found at: [State and Tribal Wetland-Program Plans](#).

**Wetland Program Plan versus WPDG application.** As described above, a Wetland Program Plan is a plan that outlines the goals, broad actions and activities that a state, Tribal or territory wetland program may want to undertake to develop or refine its wetland program. A WPDG application is a more detailed set of projects and tasks that an eligible applicant may undertake over the next year or two to develop actions or activities in an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan.

If a state, Tribe or territory already has a current EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan, they may submit an application to carry out grant-eligible actions in their approved Wetland Program Plan. The state, Tribe or territory must indicate in their application(s) which of the development or refinement actions from their EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan they intend to carry out.

If a state, Tribe or territory does not have an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan or if their EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan is expiring, they may apply to develop/update a Wetland Program Plan.

In addition to developing a Wetland Program Plan, a state, Tribe or territory may want to include in their application other program developing or refining tasks to undertake while also developing their Wetland Program Plan. The state, Tribe or territory must indicate in their WPDG application, which associated action(s) the project will take, as described in [Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions](#).

A state, Tribe or territory may apply to refine an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan if the plan needs significant changes. A Wetland Program Plan may be refined when the plan has not expired or is not about to expire but additional changes may need to be made to update the Wetland Program Plan as a whole or in part because of more recent developments in the state, Tribal or territory wetland program.

States, Tribes or territories submitting applications to develop or revise a Wetland Program Plan under Track 1: WPP may want to include travel support and meeting set-up and facilitation support to hold meetings for state, Tribal or territory agencies, stakeholders and/or others. Alternative training workshops due to the impacts of natural disasters and/or health emergencies may include switching from in-person formats to virtual only.

Funds awarded under this announcement for wetland meetings/training workshops may be used by recipients to promote participation and to support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel. Assistance funds may be used by the successful applicant to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees at training sessions, roundtables or workgroup meetings. The applicant will select meeting locations, secure meeting facilities (e.g., meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment) and develop meeting agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use their logo on any corresponding materials; the EPA will use its logo on any corresponding materials. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the meetings. The EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

#### **Track Two: Non-WPP Applications (states, Tribes, territories, local government, interstate agencies, intertribal consortium, and universities that are an agency of a state)**

Under Track Two, states, Tribes, territories, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and universities that are agencies of a state must submit applications that will develop or refine a state's, Tribe's or territory's wetland program by either carrying out one or more action(s): 1) from [Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions](#) or 2) that advance the grant-eligible actions articulated in an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan. Applicants must indicate in their applications which associated action(s) their project would take from [Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions](#). If the applicant is an interstate agency, intertribal consortium, local government or an university that is an agency of a state and is carrying out an action(s) from an EPA-approved state, Tribal or territory Wetland Program Plan they must indicate which EPA-approved state, Tribal or territory Wetland Program Plan they are working from, which actions(s) their project would develop or refine from the Wetland Program Plan.

Examples of how to link to an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan include, but are not limited to:

- In their EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan, a state, Tribe or territory proposes to develop regulations on groundwater withdrawals in areas surrounding vital wetlands. To link to this Wetland Program Plan, an interstate agency, intertribal consortium, local government or

university that is an agency of a state may propose to study the effect of groundwater withdrawals on types of wetlands common in the state, Tribe or territory and provide the results of the study to the state, Tribe or territory. The goal would be to inform the regulations governing groundwater withdrawals in areas near vital wetlands.

- In their EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan, a state, Tribe or territory proposes to survey wetlands identified in its existing wetland inventory to verify location, hydric conditions and wetland type. To link to this Wetland Program Plan, an interstate agency, intertribal consortium, local government or university that is an agency of a state proposes to perform this verification within an area of the state, Tribe or territory.

### Program Activities

#### **1. Project Need and Environmental Benefits**

It is important to describe specific aspects of your geographic area, specific threats affecting your wetlands, streams, or other aquatic resources and how this issue will be addressed by the development of a Wetland Program Plan or through the action(s) you have described in the application. Additional information on the description of need and how it will be evaluated can be found in Section 4.B.2.a. and Section 6.B.a.

In addition, please indicate the environmental benefit(s) associated with your project from the list below along with a short description of how the project meets one of these benefits.

- Addresses water quality and/or quantity challenges, improves habitat or prevents or reduces nonpoint source pollution.
- Reduces, minimizes or avoids wetland losses or impacts.
- Expands research, education and develops wetland assessment tools for wetland restoration and protection.
- Expands the adaptive capacity of communities, wildlife and plants to be resilient.
- Deepens community engagement or use of wetlands for recreational and cultural purposes.

If you feel your project does not fall under one of these benefits, please indicate the environmental benefit of your project with a short description.

#### **2. Transfer of Results**

Active transfer of project results (outputs/outcomes), lessons learned and/or methods to other states, Tribes, territories or local governments and agencies within and beyond their own organization is extremely important so that others can better develop their wetland programs.

Transfer of Results can occur during or after the grant period. Additional information on this section of the application and how it will be evaluated can be found in Section 4.B.2.e: Transfer of Results and Section 6.B.e.

#### **3. Project Partners**

Effective partnerships are important for the success of projects solicited under this announcement. In their applications, applicants should identify appropriate and necessary partnerships to successfully conduct the project. Applications will be evaluated based on their partnerships described in Section 4.B.2.h Partnership Information and Section 6.B.h.

#### 4. Environmental Results

Applicants are required to describe how funding will help EPA achieve outputs and outcomes in their responses to the criteria in Section 6. Outputs and outcomes specific to each project will be identified as deliverables in the negotiated workplan if the application is selected for award.

Recipients will be expected to report progress toward the attainment of expected project outputs and outcomes during the project performance period. Outputs and outcomes are defined as follows:

Outputs are an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced or provided over time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during the project period. The expected outputs for the grants awarded under these guidelines may include but are not limited to:

- Development of state, Tribal, or territory WPP (described in Section 3.A., *Track One: WPP Applications*) (All Core Elements).
- Development of training materials and tools to help state, Tribal, territory and local government decisionmakers integrate wetland protection and restoration into integrated watershed planning. The project can and is encouraged to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (Voluntary Restoration/Protection and/or Regulatory Core Elements).
- Development of wetland maps directly or by supporting wetland mapping coalitions that may also incorporate traditionally important and sacred species identification in the wetland types (All Core Elements).
- Development of strategies that consider hazard mitigation/flood/drought planning and resiliency into wetland restoration and protection (Voluntary Restoration and Protection Core Element, Regulatory Core Element).
- Development of a report on the ambient condition of wetland resources at a state, Tribal, territory, local or population scale and may include traditionally important and sacred species, sites, etc. (Monitoring and Assessment Core Element).
- Development of a permit program to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States or waters of the state, Tribe or territory. This permit program can include the assumption of the CWA Section 404 permitting program or development of a state, Tribal, territory or local permitting program (Regulatory Core Element).
- Development of a water quality certification program under CWA Section 401 (Regulatory Core Element).
- Development of strategies to integrate goals of wetland protection and restoration programs or activities into water reuse planning (Voluntary Restoration/Protection and/or Regulatory Core Elements).
- Development of methods or strategies to incorporate wetland water quality standards into the EPA approved state or Tribal water quality standards and may include traditional and cultural uses (Wetland-specific Water Quality Standard Core Element).
- Development of methods and studies to address at-risk or vulnerable wetland ecosystems, aquatic resources and wetland-dependent priority species due to hazard mitigation/flooding/drought impacts and resilience into wetland protection and watershed planning (Monitoring and Assessment Core Element).
- Development of education and outreach materials for wetland staff, Tribal members, the public and other sectors (All of the Core Elements).

- Development of tools or procedures, or studies and programs, to evaluate the ecological performance of compensatory mitigation projects (e.g., mitigation banks, in-lieu fee projects and permittee-responsible mitigation) and incorporate the results/findings/lessons learned into future compensatory mitigation project decision-making to help determine mitigation program success (Regulatory Core Element).

Outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out the activities under the grant. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic; must be qualitative or quantitative; and may not necessarily be achievable during the project period. EPA anticipates the outcomes from the projects awarded under this announcement may be an increase in the capacity to:

- Increase quantity of wetlands.
- Increase quality of wetlands.
- Improve wetland protection efforts.
- Increase stakeholder's and decisionmaker's understanding of a wetland's condition for a variety of uses/functions.
- Increase stakeholder's and decisionmaker's understanding of wetland ecologic condition and/or function at population scales (i.e., community or regional).
- Increase stakeholder's and decisionmaker's understanding of the impacts of increased flooding/drought and/or resilience-building actions on wetlands, including on traditional and cultural uses.
- Improve wetland inventories and baseline condition assessments to address hazard mitigation/flood/drought effects.
- Improve data to use in modeling potential hydrologic change, ecosystem/biogeographic shifts, wetland losses or wetland increases on the landscape that can be used to inform stakeholders and decisionmakers.
- Increase stakeholder's and decisionmaker's understanding of how to develop a CWA Section 404 state or Tribal regulatory program.
- Increase stakeholder's and decisionmaker's understanding of how to develop a CWA Section 401 state or Tribal water quality certification program or CWA Section 401(a)(2) state or Tribal neighboring jurisdiction program.
- Increase stakeholder's and decisionmaker's knowledge through training and outreach for state, Tribal, territory or local wetland staff, the public, at-risk communities and/or other partners.
- Improve baseline information on wetland extent, condition and performance to inform state, Tribal, territory or local regulatory programs.
- Increase stakeholder's and decisionmaker's understanding of the ecological success of compensatory mitigation and use to inform stakeholders and decisionmakers.

For reference, a list of previously funded projects is posted in the EPA's [Wetland Grants Database](#).

## B. Program Goals and Objectives

The activities to be funded under this funding announcement as described in Assistance Listing [66.461](#) support Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every America and Pillar 3: Permitting Reform, Cooperative Federalism, and Cross-Agency Partnership of [Administrator Zeldin's Five Pillars](#).

## **C. Statutory Authority**

The statutory authority for WPDGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1254(b)(3). Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these funds to developing or refining wetland programs by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction and elimination of pollution. Projects that are demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods or approaches to be eligible for WPDGs. The EPA expects that the results of each project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project.

## **D. Funding Type**

It is anticipated that grants and cooperative agreements will be funded under this funding opportunity.

Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant(s) in the performance of the work supported. Although the EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant.
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work.
- in accordance with [2 CFR 200.317](#) and [2 CFR 200.318](#), review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (the EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

The 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.

# **4. Application Contents and Format**

## **A. Application Forms**

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

### ***Mandatory Documents:***

1. **Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)**  
Complete the form. There are no attachments.
2. **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)**  
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 (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits) and the total indirect amount should also be indicated on line 22. In Section B: Budget Categories row 1, column

(e) should be filled out for federal funds, row 1 column (f) should be filled out for non-federal cost-share and row 5 should be filled out for total project costs (federal funds, non-federal cost share and project total).

3. **EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54**  
Complete the form. Attach additional forms as needed.
4. **EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report**  
Complete the form. Tips for filling out this form can be found at [Tips Completing the EPA Form 4700-4](#).
5. **Project Narrative Attachment Form: use this to submit your Project Narrative**  
See description for the Project Narrative in Section 4.B. below.

*Optional Documents:*

6. **Other Attachments Form: Use this to submit other attachments, if applicable**  
Use this to submit other attachments, including the applicants Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as applicable; Letters of Commitment; biographical sketches of major project managers, support staff members, other major project participants, Quality Assurance/Quality Control documents and others if applicable.  
You may provide some or all the optional attachments listed below. **The optional attachments identified below are not included in the 26-page limit for the project narrative.** Attachments (some are discussed above) may include the following:
  - a. *Pictures and Maps*  
Pictures and/or maps may be attached to describe the project.
  - b. *Staff Resumes*  
Staff resumes may be included to describe the experience of relevant applicant staff and should not be more than approximately two pages per person.
  - c. *Letters of Commitment*  
Letters of commitment may be useful in demonstrating support for applications submitted under either *Track One: WPP* or *Track Two: Non-WPP*. All letters of commitment should be on the official letterhead of the agency or organization and should be addressed to the applicant. Letters of commitment may be attached to verify for example:
    - Partners' support/commitment/use for the project.
    - Cost share or other resources provided by partners.
    - How partners/others will make use of the project's results.Partners who will be providing cost share should describe the resources (in-kind services or dollars) that they are committing to the project for each task and budget category (see item viii. Detailed Budget under the Project Description Section, above).  
For ease of review, the EPA encourages applicants not to attach full documents such as surveys, studies or journal articles. Excerpts (title page plus only relevant pages) and/or links from documents are acceptable and encouraged. The items listed directly above are **not** subject to the Project Narrative page limit.

**7. Budget Narrative Attachment Form**

Use this form to submit optional budget narrative. This will be considered part of the page limit if utilized.

The Project Narrative must be no more than **twenty-six (26) double-spaced 8.5 x 11-inch pages** (a page is one side of paper) or thirteen (13) single-spaced pages except for documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below.

Pages should be consecutively numbered and it is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 0.75-inch margins and that applicants format their Project Narrative as described below for ease of reading.

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 the application.

## **B. Project Narrative Description**

The EPA encourages applicants to organize the Project Narrative based on the outlined sections (1-5) below.

Budget information and the milestone schedule, described below, must be included within the Project Narrative page limit (26 page double-spaced or 13 page single-spaced), and not in the supporting materials or appendix.

Any supporting materials (such as commitment letters from partners, annotated resumes and Quality Assurance/Quality Control Plans) that the applicant chooses to provide are not included in the 26-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative and should be submitted as attachments. See Section 4.A.6., above, for a discussion of optional supporting materials. When possible, please submit all supporting materials as one electronic file, such as but not limited to, PDF.

**The 26-page double-spaced Project Narrative must include the information listed below in items 1-5** and address the relevant evaluation criteria in Section 6.B for either *Track One: WPP* or *Track Two: Non-WPP* as applicable. The Project Narrative must also address the threshold eligibility factors in Sections 2 and 6 as applicable. If a particular item is not applicable, the application should clearly state this.

**1. Cover Page (included in the page limit) with:**

- a. Project Title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less).
- b. Indicate whether the applicant is in *Track One: WPP* or *Track Two: Non-WPP*.
  - i. *Track One: WPP* Applicants: indicate if they will develop a Wetland Program Plan (optional: also list actions described in the Wetland Program Development Grant Eligible Activities), or identify one or more grant-eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan.
  - ii. *Track Two: Non-WPP* Applicants: list action(s) (see [Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions](#)) they plan to complete. Intertribal consortium applicant can reference one or more grant eligible action(s) from an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan.

- c. Name of applicant and applicant's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).
- d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number).
- e. Geographic Location - 8- or 14-digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s) with watershed name(s) if the project is not located across the entire state, Tribe, territory or local government with weblink provided. If the project is local in scale, provide the name of the city or county, state, Tribe and/or zip code.
- f. Total project cost, federal dollars requested and cost share (if the award will be placed in a PPG, please indicate that as well).
- g. Abstract/project summary. The abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the application. It should also include a list of the main tasks to be accomplished and a description of the final product(s). The entire abstract should be 250 words or less.

2. **Project Description - Please address the following categories (a-j) outlined below.**  
Applications will be evaluated according to the selection criteria described in Section 6.B.

a. **Project Need and Environmental Benefit**

i. *Project Need*  
Describe the need for the project as it pertains to developing or refining wetland program(s). The description should include:

- The threats affecting your wetlands/streams/aquatic resources.
- The need for the proposed actions.
- How the deliverables will lead to an increase in the quality and quantity of wetlands.

Describe specific aspects of your geographic area, specific adverse issues your wetlands face and how this issue will be addressed by the development of a Wetland Program Plan or through the action(s) you have described in the application.

Beyond a narrative description of the need for the project, some examples of ways to provide additional information that the project is needed by an applicant or that the applicant at least exercised due diligence to further demonstrate state, Tribal, territory, or local government need for the project include (but are not limited to):

- Letters of Commitment from state(s), Tribe(s), territory(ies) or local government(s) indicating their support, need, or use for the project's deliverables.
- Documentation of the responses from efforts made to reach out to states, Tribes, territories or local governments with respect to project need. Such documentation could include dates of e-mails, letters, or phone calls and the title(s) of the person(s) the applicant reached.
- Citing results of surveys or studies that show a clear need for the proposed outputs and outcomes.
- Citing activities articulated in an EPA-approved Wetland Program Plan.

ii. **Environmental Benefit**

Indicate one or more of the listed Environmental Benefits from Section 3.A.1 or if it does not meet one of the listed benefits a description of another Environmental Benefit the project will meet and describe how the project will meet that benefit.

**b. Project Tasks**

Describe the steps you will take to meet the project product/output(s) and objective(s). Describe the projects tasks or components and the anticipated products/outputs associated with each task. Include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant. If the development of a methodology is part of the proposed project, then describe the planned development steps. If travel assistance is to be provided for non-Federal attendees, describe the process for selecting non-Federal attendees who may receive travel assistance.

**c. Milestone Schedule and Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds**

- i. *Milestone Schedule* - Provide a milestone schedule covering each year of the entire project/budget period. Include a breakout of the project tasks into phases with associated tasks and products/outputs. Include the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task including transfer of results. Provide interim milestone dates for achieving each workplan component.
- ii. *Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds* - Include an approach, procedures and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

**d. Detailed Budget**

Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task. Please see the [EPA's Budget Development Guidance](#), which includes a sample budget.

Additional sample budgets can be found at on our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) website.

Specific guidance for Tribes can be found in [GPI 13-02](#), Streamlining Tribal Grants Management, with a sample budget at the end of the document.

**States, Tribes and territories should indicate in their application submission if they anticipate including this project, if selected for funding, into an existing PPG or if they intend to create a new PPG that would include this wetland project.**

Budget information may be provided in table format if the applicant chooses, but all budget information must be included within the page limit.

If travel for staff is planned for the project, indicate it in the budget. Include travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings/training workshops throughout the proposed project period that are related in scope to the application. If applicable, the budget workplan for the “other” cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-Federal attendees.

While contractual and subaward efforts may be part of an applicant’s application, each WPDG recipient must be significantly involved in administering the award. Note that any proposed subawards or contracts between partners for non-commercial services should be included in the “other” cost category of the SF-424A.

Any optional Letters of Commitment you wish to provide, from intended cost share partners should be attached to your application as supporting documents. Letters of Commitment are not counted in the 26-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative. The letters should be submitted on the organization's letterhead and may be addressed to the applicant. For more discussion of Letters of Commitment, see Section 4.A.6.

Note that additional budgetary guidelines apply to projects that are required to meet the Federal Geographic Data Committee Wetlands Mapping Standards (see Section 4.F., below).

**e. Transfer of Results**

Describe the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results (outputs/outcomes), lessons learned and/or methods to other states, Tribes, territories or local governments and agencies within and beyond their own organization, so that the others can better develop their wetland programs. Transfer of Results can occur during or after the grant period.

Examples of ways to demonstrate how the project may be used by an applicant include:

- Presenting results at forums typically attended by representatives from states, Tribes, territory or local government wetland programs.
- Documenting how you intend to share results with a relevant state, Tribal, territory or local government wetland program.
- Submitting map data to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for incorporation within the publicly available [Wetlands Mapper](#).
- Conducting a webinar or other outreach to states, Tribes, territories or local governments at relevant conferences.
- Sharing results on a website and sharing the website address with relevant organizations.

Successful applicants are expected to present project results at an EPA Wetland Program meeting, workshop or webinar. The proposed budget should reflect travel costs, as appropriate during the grant period.

Alternative training workshops, due to the impacts of natural disasters, health emergencies or other reasons, may include switching from in-person formats to online only.

**f. Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes and Tracking**

This information may be provided in table or narrative form.

*i. Environmental Results (link to Administrator Zeldin's Five Pillars)*

Describe how the activities to be funded under this funding announcement support Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every America and/or Pillar 3: Permitting Reform, Cooperative Federalism, and Cross-Agency Partnership of [Administrator Zeldin's Five Pillars](#).

*ii. Outputs (products/deliverables)*

List and describe the output(s) expected to be achieved through the completion of the proposed project (examples of outputs can be found in Section 3.A.5).

*iii. Outcomes (objectives/environmental improvements)*

List and describe the short and long-term outcomes (i.e., environmental improvements) expected to be achieved as a result of the project outputs (examples of outcomes can be found in Section 3.A.5).

*iv. Tracking Outputs and Outcomes*

Describe your approach for measuring and tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) and project outcome(s). This does not include your progress reports to the EPA but how you will track your progress to achieving outputs and outcomes that you will then report to the EPA. Examples of how you may track and evaluate progress internally and with partners include but are not limited to frequency of updates/meetings with internal teams/management, frequency of updates/meetings with partners, how outcomes/outputs will be included in future management decisions and reevaluation of timeline and budget and other project management activities.

**g. Programmatic Capability, Technical Experience and Qualifications**

Applications should describe the following elements:

*i. Organizational Experience*

Provide a brief description of your organizational experience related to the proposed project, and your infrastructure and readiness and ability to implement the proposed project in a successful and timely manner.

*ii. Staff Experience/Qualifications*

Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge relevant to the proposed project. Describe your organization's resources, or the ability to obtain them (through hiring, contracting and/or other means), to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Providing biographical sketches or annotated resumes of the applicant's key staff is encouraged. Biographical sketches are not included in the 26-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative and should be provided using the Other Attachments form. See Section 4.A.6. for more on supporting documentation attachments.

**h. Project Partners**

Describe proposed partner entities, their roles and whether they will participate as subrecipients. Describe the agencies/organizations who will partner with you as appropriate and necessary to successfully conduct the project, to help accomplish outputs/products and to achieve the objectives/outcomes for improving state, Tribal, territory and local government wetland protection programs. Provide a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of specific partners in the project's components (or tasks) and how these partnerships will contribute to developing a state, Tribal, territory or local government's wetland program. If an applicant is in the process of engaging a partner, applications should describe how the applicant plans to engage that partner and establish a working relationship to successfully complete the project.

Applicants may also describe how they will partner within their organization or, if appropriate, how having no partners is the best or only reasonable approach for accomplishing the project objectives.

If the applicant is an **interstate agency, intertribal consortium or college or university that is an agency of a state** they should describe how they have already and/or will continue to partner (during the project) with the appropriate state(s) and/or Tribe(s) in which the project is physically located, where the results of the project are intended to be used, or if appropriate, how having no additional partners is the best or only reasonable approach for accomplishing the project activities.

Applicants may attach optional letters of commitment from intended partners as supporting documents. Letters of commitment will not be counted in the 26-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative. The letters should be submitted on the organization's letterhead and should be addressed to the applicant. For more discussion of letters of commitment, see Section 4.A.6, above.

**i. Past Performance**

Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) that the applicant performed within the **last three years (no more than five (5) agreements)**. **If the applicant had any EPA agreements in the last three years those are preferred to be included.**

- i. Describe whether and how you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
- ii. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, and adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those assistance agreements (and if not, explain why not).

**3. Restoration Demonstration Project Information**

If you are proposing a restoration demonstration project, describe the current environmental condition of the project site and the reason for restoration. Describe how the design and installation of your restoration demonstration project would take relevant potential impacts into account when considering your project's long-term viability (i.e., increased storm event intensity, increased heat stress, increased potential for wildfire). Describe your post-installation monitoring program and whether it will be funded as a part of this project or with another named funding source. If another funding source would be used, explain how you are confident that this work will be funded. Describe the regulatory authorities that you must comply with (e.g., CWA Section 404 permits, any applicable state, Tribe and local permits). You may need to comply with regulations in order to conduct, monitor and/or maintain a proposed restoration demonstration project. If you are not proposing this type of project, do not provide any description.

**4. Quality Assurance/Quality Control Statement**

If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how and when you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section 4.F., Quality Assurance/Quality Control, below for a definition of environmental data which includes more than the collection of new data and information and any additional information). At a minimum, most grants will require a Quality Management Plan. A Quality Management Plan is a document that describes an organization's quality system. It identifies the organizational structure, policy

and procedures, functional responsibilities of management and staff, lines of authority, and its processes for planning, implementing, documenting and assessing all activities conducted under the organization's quality system. If data will be collected using federal funds, a Quality Management Plan and/or Quality Assurance Project Plan will be required before data collection can begin. To find out more about the EPA's Quality Assurance/Quality Control program go to the [EPA's Quality Program Website](#).

#### **5. Invasive Species Control**

If applicable, describe how you will ensure that your project does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. Explain how you would respond if an invasive species problem occurs in relation to your project, including adding this information to your Quality Assurance/Quality Control documents. (See Section 4.F., Invasive Species Control below, for further information).

### **C. Applicants Using Contractors**

Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the [procurement provisions](#) of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200.

Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a "partner" or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements. If an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application, it does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements.

The EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subrecipients and/or named contractor(s) during the application evaluation process unless the applicant provides documentation that it has complied with these requirements.

For additional guidance, applicants should review [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#), [EPA's Subaward Policy](#), and [EPA's Subaward Policy Frequent Questions](#). The EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500, as well as the requirements in 2 CFR Part 200.321 and 40 CFR Part 33 Subpart C.

### **D. Release Copies of Applications**

Copies of applications submitted under this NOFO may be made publicly available on [Wetland Program Development Grants](#) for approximately two years after selections are made.

Applicants should:

- clearly indicate which portion(s) of the application are confidential, privileged, or sensitive information, or
- state 'n/a' or 'not applicable' if the application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information;

- not include trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is confidential or privileged, or sensitive information that would invade another individual’s personal privacy (e.g., an individual’s salary, personal email addresses, etc.);
- be aware that if such information is included, it will be treated in accordance with [40 CFR 2.203](#).

## **E. Coalition Coverage**

A coalition is formed when two or more eligible applicants coordinate to submit a single application. Coalitions must identify which single eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will receive subawards from the recipient (the “pass-through entity”). The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to the EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in [2 CFR 200.1](#) and comply with the [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#).

## **F. Other Program Specific Application Information**

### **1. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL**

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements may be applicable to these assistance agreements (see 2 CFR § 1500.12). Quality Assurance/Quality Control 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. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. The EPA can assist applicants in determining whether Quality Assurance/Quality Control is required for the proposed project. If Quality Assurance/Quality Control is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA Quality Assurance/Quality Control staff to determine the appropriate Quality Assurance/Quality Control practices for the project. Contact the Agency Contact (See Section 1.E. for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA Quality Assurance/Quality Control staff.

If project tasks include wetland mapping, contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to facilitate production of a standards-compliant dataset. All funded mapping projects for which the Federal Geographic Data Committee mapping standards, as described below, apply will be required to contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory at [Wetlands\\_Team@fws.gov](mailto:Wetlands_Team@fws.gov) prior to project initiation and participate in the National Wetland Inventory Quality Assurance/Quality Control process to ensure that data are standards compliant. Additional information can be found at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services’ [Wetland Mapping Website](#).

Successful applicants must ensure all water quality data generated in accordance with an EPA-approved QAPP, 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. When uploading data through WQX or WQXweb, data should be identified as WPDG-related by providing project ID WPDG in the data submission. More information about WQX and WQXweb, including tutorials, can be found at the [Water Quality Data Website](#).

### **2. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL**

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112, the recipient of the EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to ensure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer. For more information go to the [National Invasive Species Information Center](#).

### **3. WETLANDS MAPPING STANDARD**

A national wetlands mapping standard was developed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee with input from dozens of federal agencies and led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the EPA. The objective of the Federal Geographic Data Committee Wetlands Mapping Standard is to support the accurate mapping and classification of wetlands while ensuring mechanisms for their revision and update as directed under U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Circular A-16](#). In accordance with OMB Circular A-16, all wetlands mapping projects funded through the federal government must comply with the Federal Geographic Data Committee Wetlands Mapping Standard. (Non-federally funded wetlands mapping projects are also encouraged to comply with the standard). Standard compliant data will be added to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory geospatial dataset and displayed on the [Wetlands Mapper](#). Detailed information on the wetlands mapping standard, which includes mandatory use of the *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States* can be found at: [Federal Geographic Data Committee Wetland Mapping Standard](#) (FGDC-STD-015-2009). “Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States,” can be found at [Federal Geographic Data Committee Wetlands Mapping Standard](#) (FGDC-STD-004-2013). Information on wetland mapping using the EPA’s funding can be found at [Mapping Guide for Wetland Program Development Grants Guide](#).

To facilitate production of a standards compliant dataset, all funded projects for which the aforementioned standards apply will be required to contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory at [Wetlands\\_Team@fws.gov](mailto:Wetlands_Team@fws.gov) prior to project initiation, and participate in the National Wetland Inventory Quality Assurance/Quality Control process to ensure that data are standards compliant. The feasibility of producing standards compliant data with a proposed budget will be considered when making grant awards. Typically, compliant data cannot be produced for less than 8 cents/acre. Please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if you have questions regarding the mapping standard or budget development ([Wetlands\\_Team@fws.gov](mailto:Wetlands_Team@fws.gov)). Additional guidance on the creation of standards compliant wetlands mapping data can be found at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [National Wetland Inventory Contributed Data](#) page and information on how U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviews standard compliant data can be found at: [Federal Wetland Mapping Standard Compliance](#).

### **4. ADHERENCE TO THE EPA NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL DATA POLICY**

The National Geospatial Data Policy establishes principles, responsibilities and requirements for collecting and managing geospatial data used by Federal environmental programs and projects within the jurisdiction of the EPA. This Policy also establishes the requirement of collecting and managing geospatial metadata describing the Agency’s geospatial assets to underscore EPA’s commitment to data sharing, promoting secondary data use and supporting the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. This Policy applies to all of the EPA’s organizations, grantees, agents working on behalf of the EPA, Tribes, localities territories and partner states of the EPA who design, develop directly or indirectly, compile, operate or maintain the EPA information collections developed for environmental program support and can be found at the EPA’s [Geospatial Policies and Standards](#).

## 5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

### A. Submission Dates and Times

April 6, 2026 11:59 pm ET Application Submission Deadline

April 6, 2026 10:59 pm CT Application Submission Deadline (Local Time)

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application. If you submit the same application more than once, we will accept the last on-time submission.

### B. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

#### **SAM.gov**

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. SAM.gov will provide a UEI for your organization, which is required to apply for grants using Grants.gov. To register, go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and click Get Started. From the same page, you can also click on the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for the information you will need to register. Make sure you are current with SAM.gov and UEI requirements before applying for the award.

SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. [Begin that process today.](#)

#### **Grants.gov**

You must also have an active account with [Grants.gov](#). You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

Please visit [How to Register to Apply for Grants](#) for additional information.

### C. Submission Instructions

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. See Section 5.B. above for information on getting registered.

Important tips:

- 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.
- See the Quick Start Guide for Applicants for instructions on how to submit.
- Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks.
- Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.
- Your application must be submitted by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance.
- If you receive an error or the 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).
- See Grants.gov Errors for information on other Grants.gov errors.
- 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.

## **D. Technical Issues with Submission**

If applicants experience technical issues during the submission of an application that they are unable to resolve, follow these procedures before the application deadline date:

- Contact Grants.gov Support Center before the application deadline date.
- Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- Send an email with Funding Opportunity Number (FON):EPA-REG5-WPDG-25 in the subject line to WPDG-RFA@epa.gov before the application deadline time and date and must include the following:
  - Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
  - Description of the issue
  - 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.

## **E. Intergovernmental Review**

You will need to submit application information for [Intergovernmental Review](#). Some states have adopted Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for coordinating the review.

Intergovernmental review is applicable to this assistance listing when proposed Federal financial assistance involves land use planning or construction associated with demonstration projects.

Contact the [Region 5 grants office](#) for further instruction.

This requirement does not apply to American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes or Tribal organizations.

# **6. Application Review Information**

## **A. Responsiveness Review**

Applications must meet the eligibility requirements described in [Section 2](#) to be evaluated. Applicants not meeting these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will be notified within 15 calendar days of the determination.

- Applications must adhere to the page limit requirements. Any pages over the limit(s) in [Section 4](#) will not be reviewed.
- Initial applications must be submitted *on or before* the application deadline through Grants.gov or through limited circumstances as expressed in [Section 5](#). The EPA will not evaluate applications that are not submitted on time.
- *Technical difficulties applying:* Applicants having technical difficulties applying must contact the Grants.gov hotline at 1-800-518-4726 *and* then must email a PDF of the full application to the

EPA contact listed in [Section 1](#). The submission must be received prior to the application deadline for consideration.

## B. Review Criteria

Criteria Name and Description	Points
<p><b>a) Project Need and Environmental Benefit(s)</b>  Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well the applicant demonstrates:</p> <p>(1) Project Need - The need for the project as it pertains to developing or refining a state, Tribal, territory or local government wetland program(s). (14 points)</p> <p>(2) Environmental Benefit - Indicate one or more of the listed Environmental Benefits from Section 3.A.1 or if it does not meet one of the listed benefits a description of another Environmental Benefit the project will meet and describe how the project will meet that benefit. (6 points)</p>	<b>20</b>
<p><b>b) Project Tasks</b>  Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate a description of the steps the applicant will take to meet the project product/output(s) and objective(s), including a clear description of project tasks and associated products and whether the applicant's approach (methodology) or the steps they propose is sound.</p>	<b>20</b>
<p><b>c) Milestone Schedule and Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds</b>  Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they provide:</p> <p>(1) Milestone Schedule – a clearly articulated milestone schedule that covers each year of the entire grant period. This includes a breakout of the project tasks into phases with associated tasks and products and the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task. (7 points)</p> <p>(2) Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds – an approach, procedures and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (4 points)</p>	<b>11</b>
<p><b>d) Budget</b>  Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable, including whether: the applicant identified the requested federal dollars and the total project cost <b>for each component/task</b> for each budget item from SF-424A; the applicant explained if and how non-federal partners will provide cost share and demonstrated the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of costs and the value of in-kind contributions.</p>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>e) Transfer of Results</b></p>	<b>7</b>

<p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate the applicant's plan for active transfer of project results (outputs/outcomes), lessons learned, and/or methods to other states, territories, Tribes or local government agencies within and beyond their own organization, so that the others can better develop their wetland programs.</p>	
<p><b>f) Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes, and Tracking</b>  Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate each of the following elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Environmental Results – the extent and quality to which the application demonstrates that the activities to be funded under this funding announcement support Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every America and/or Pillar 3: Permitting Reform, Cooperative Federalism, and Cross-Agency Partnership of <a href="#">Administrator Zeldin's Five Pillars</a>. (3 points)</li> <li>2. Outputs and Outcomes – the extent and quality to which the application demonstrates anticipated outputs, outcomes, how the application will be a step towards the goal of restoring and protecting wetland resources will be evaluated. (4 points)</li> <li>3. Tracking – the extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. (3 points)</li> </ol>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>g) Programmatic Capability, Technical Experience, and Qualifications</b>  Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully manage and complete the proposed project considering their:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Organizational experience related to the proposed project, and their infrastructure, readiness and ability to implement the proposed project in a successful and timely manner. (3 points)</li> <li>(2) Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (3 points)</li> </ol>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>h) Partnerships</b>  Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on how well the applicant has demonstrated appropriate and necessary partnerships as described in Section 4.B.2.i. or if appropriate, describe how having no partners is the best or only reasonable approach.</p>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>i) Past Performance</b>  Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 4.B.2.j. Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements (but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last five years (preferably EPA agreements). (3 points)</li> </ol>	<b>6</b>

<p>(2) History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 4.B.2.j. of the Notice of Funding Opportunity including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not. (3 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under these criteria, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p>	
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Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate that they have the capability to successfully perform the project as described in [Section 3](#) of this funding opportunity.

Only eligible entities whose applications meet the threshold criteria in [Section 2](#) of this announcement will be evaluated. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative.** Each application will be rated using a point system. Applications will be evaluated based on a total of 100 possible points.

## C. Review and Selection Process

All applications received by the submission deadline will first be screened by the EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section 2 of the announcement. Applications that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

Panel(s) of EPA staff will review eligible applications against the evaluation criteria listed in Section 5.A. above, assign scores to each application, and develop a ranked list of the applications in each Track (i.e., *Track One: WPP* and *Track Two: Non-WPP*) based on the evaluation scores received. The ranking list for each Track will be provided to the Selection Official, Region 5 Water Division Director, who makes the final funding decisions.

### (1) Other Evaluation Factors

Final funding decisions will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider the following factors:

1. Geographic distribution of funds.
2. Variation among of projects.
3. Availability of funds.
4. The distribution of awards between Track One: WPP and Track Two: Non-WPP.
5. The similarity of the project to other projects already being funded by the EPA.

6. Other program or agency priorities.

Under this competition, the EPA also reserves the right to fund the top ranked proposal for each state in Region 5 contingent on the quality of the proposals and funding availability.

## **D. Risk Review**

The EPA will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov., when doing the risk review as required by [2 CFR 200.206](#).

## **7. Award Notices**

The EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made by a Region 5 Award Official. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the Region 5 Grant Management Office. Selection does not guarantee an award will be made. Statutory authorization, funding, or other issues during the award process may affect the ability of the EPA to make an award. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, 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, 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.

## **8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration**

### **A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

The recipient and any sub-recipient must comply with the applicable [General Terms and Conditions](#). These terms and conditions are in addition to the assurances and certifications made as part of the award, terms and conditions, and restrictions reflected on the official assistance award document.

Awards issued as a result of this funding opportunity are subject to the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Title [2 CFR Part 200](#) and [2 CFR Part 1500](#).

### **B. Reporting**

[EPA's General Terms and Conditions](#) in the Notice of Award will have information on performance and financial reports, including:

- How often you will report.
- Any required form or formatting.
- How to submit them.

### **C. Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting**

The Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires:

- Data entry at SAM.gov for all subawards and subcontracts issued for \$30,000 or more.
- Reporting executive compensation for both recipient and subaward organizations.

## **9. Other Information**

### **A. Additional Provisions for Applicants**

Additional provisions that apply this funding opportunity and/or awards made under this funding opportunity, can be found at [EPA NOFO Clauses](#). If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact to obtain the provisions.