

**Request for Applications (RFA)
Research Apprenticeship Program for High School Students**

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Research and Development – RTP

Funding Opportunity Title: Research Apprenticeship Program for High School Students

Announcement Type: Initial announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-ORD-NHEERL-08-001

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement

CFDA Number: 66.511 ORD Consolidated Research/Training

Posted Date: **July 8, 2008**

Application Due Date: **August 25, 2008**

Category of Funding Activity: Environment

Anticipated Number of Awards: 1

Anticipated Total Program Funding: \$1,250,000

Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement: None

Geospatial Information: It is anticipated that the agreement that is awarded will not involve or relate to geospatial information.

Eligible Applicants

Programs under CFDA 66.511 are available to each State, territory and possession, and Tribal nation of the United States, including the District of Columbia, for public and private State universities and universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, State and local government departments, and other public or private nonprofit institutions. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive awards. Eligible nonprofit organizations include any organizations that meet the definition of nonprofit in OMB Circular A-122. However, nonprofit organizations described in Section 502(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. Universities and educational institutions must be subject to OMB Circular A-21.

Federal Agency Name

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Research and Development
National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory**

Description

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency seeks to enter into this cooperative agreement with an eligible entity which will provide training opportunities for high school students. One cooperative agreement will be awarded to a single recipient responding to this solicitation. The purpose of this cooperative agreement is to stimulate interest among exceptional high school students, including under-privileged and minority students, in pursuing advanced degrees in math, science, environmental sciences and engineering. The essence of this program is to enrich the environmental science concepts that students study in the classroom and to provide research experience for high school seniors at a federal research facility. The research conducted by the students will be at the EPA facilities in Research Triangle Park, N.C. under the direction of EPA scientists who serve as mentors to the students.

Application Materials:

Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications electronically using the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov/>. Electronic submissions must be submitted via Grants.gov by **August 25, 2008**, 11:59 p.m., EST. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, you need to allow approximately one week for completing the registration process. This registration, and electronic submission of your application, must be performed by an appropriate representative of your organization.

Applicants who lack the technical capability to apply through Grants.gov may mail their applications to Frances W. Richards, US Environmental Protection Agency, 109 T.W. Alexander Drive, (MD-343-01), Research Triangle Park, N.C., 27711 by **August 25, 2008**, 5:00 p.m., EST.

Link to Full Announcement:

END OF COVER PAGE

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Title of Assistance Opportunity: “Research Apprenticeship Program for High School Students”

A. Background:

The Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP) began in 1990 as a collaborative effort between EPA’s Office of Research and Development in Research Triangle Park, NC and an historically black college/university (HBCU) located in Raleigh, N.C. The program was established to encourage high school students to pursue advanced degrees in math, science, the environmental sciences and engineering by 1) enriching the scientific and mathematic concepts that students study in the classroom; 2) providing the opportunity to interact with scientists; 3) developing effective scientific research and technical skills; and 4) enhancing students’ motivation, self-confidence, and desire to achieve. Students accepted into the RAP demonstrate superior ability in math, science and engineering, are in grades 9 through 12 (although application takes place in 8th grade) and live within commuting distance of Research Triangle Park, N.C. Students maintain high academic performance in high school, adhere to strict attendance standards to remain in the program and receive a stipend under the cooperative agreement.

Students enter the program as rising 9th graders and continue through the 12th grade. Currently, there are ten positions for each of the four grades for a total of 40 students. There are two sessions: the academic year and the summer. Three Saturdays each month during the academic year, students attend classes, workshops and monthly interactive presentations by EPA scientists at the recipient’s site.

During the summer, the rising 9th 10th and 11th grade students attend 6 weeks of classes and workshops at the recipient’s site. The rising seniors apprentice with EPA mentors in Research Triangle Park and are transported to the EPA facility by the recipient. This intensive experience immerses the students in scientific research and culminates in a research forum at EPA during which each student presents their project to an audience that includes the mentors, other students in the program, their families, and EPA scientists.

B. Scope of Work

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to solicit applications from eligible applicants with experience in the recruitment and training of high school students, to develop a training program through a cooperative agreement with EPA’s Office of Research and Development, National Health & Environmental Effects Research Laboratory. The objective is to provide training to high school students in areas of math, science, the environmental sciences and engineering. The experience gained while attending classes and workshops at the recipient’s location and receiving training in an actual research setting with EPA scientists will stimulate the

interest of students in environmental studies, hopefully leading to obtaining advanced degrees in math, science, engineering and the environmental sciences.

The application should demonstrate the applicant's ability to continue the program or provide one of a similar nature for the next five years. The successful applicant would be expected to assimilate those students who have not graduated, and to provide opportunities for new students to participate. Applicants should propose their approach for continuing the program for the existing students, their approach for new students, and how these two groups will be coordinated. Refer to Section IV for information to be included in the application/proposal.

The program will provide assistance to students for the purpose of enriching the environmental science concepts that students study in the classroom and will provide opportunities for the students to interact with scientists and engineers at EPA. There will be substantial Federal involvement in this project; e.g., scientists at EPA/RTP will: (1) give scientific presentations to the students in the program and (2) serve as mentors for the students during the students' summer internship at EPA/RTP.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. Tasks under this project support the following goals/objectives as identified in EPA's Strategic Plan found at: http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/2006/entire_report.pdf.

- Goal 1 – Clean Air and Global Climate Change
 - Objective 1.6 Enhance Science and Research
- Goal 2 – Clean and Safe Water
 - Objective 2.3 Enhance Science and Research
- Goal 3 – Land Preservation and Restoration
 - Objective 3.3 Enhance Science and Research
- Goal 4 – Healthy Communities and Ecosystems
 - Objective 4.4 Enhance Science and Research
 - Human Health
 - Ecological Research
 - Global Climate Change Research
 - Endocrine Disruptors Research
 - Human Health Risk Assessment Research
 - Computational Toxicology Research
 - Homeland Security Research
 - Safe Pesticides and Products Research (SP2)

2. Outcomes. The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. The principal outcome of this cooperative agreement is that at least eight (8) high school students per year complete the program with a

strong interest in pursuing a field of study related to math, science, the environmental sciences or engineering.

3. Outputs. The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Outputs from this agreement include opportunities for the training of exceptional students, including under privileged and minority students, by providing the students financial assistance during their training and the use of highly specialized laboratory facilities and equipment; the presentation of a project by each graduating student; and the opportunity for trainees to receive specific mentoring/guidance by EPA scientists.

D. Supplementary Information.

The statutory authorities for this cooperative training agreement are Clean Air Act, Section 103; Clean Water Act, Section 104; Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442; Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001 and Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 308.

Geospatial Information

It is anticipated that the agreement that is awarded will not involve or relate to geospatial information.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Anticipated Amount of Individual Award

The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is approximately \$1,250,000.

B. Anticipated Number of Awards

EPA anticipates the award of one cooperative agreement under this announcement. Additionally, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of original selection date.

C. Anticipated Funding

The EPA is expected to fund this award over a period of 5 years. Funding for the first year of the award is expected to be approximately \$250,000. Additional funding of approximately \$250,000 per year for the second through fifth years will be contingent upon availability of funds and satisfactory progress by the selected recipient. **In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves**

the right to partially fund applications/proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a application/proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the application/proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

D. Anticipated Project Period:

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will be October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2013.

E. Funding Type

EPA anticipates funding the selected project in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. The following EPA terms and conditions reflecting substantial involvement will be included in the proposed cooperative agreement:

1. EPA scientists will serve as mentors for the student interns during the 6-week apprenticeship period in the summer immediately after trainees complete the 11th grade.
2. The EPA Project Officer will coordinate the process of matching trainees with EPA investigators and provide recommended matches to the recipient's Program Director.
3. EPA employees, including ORD scientists will present seminars, lectures, and demonstrations of their research to the students.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Programs under CFDA 66.511 are available to each State, territory and possession, and Tribal nation of the United States, including the District of Columbia, for public and private State universities and universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, State and local government departments, and other public or private nonprofit institutions, and in some cases, individuals or foreign entities who have demonstrated unusually high scientific ability. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive awards. Eligible nonprofit organizations include any organizations that meet the definition of nonprofit in OMB Circular A-122. However, nonprofit organizations described in Section 502(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. Universities and educational institutions must be subject to OMB Circular A-21.

National laboratories funded by Federal Agencies (Federally-Funded Research and Development Centers, “FFRDCs”) may not apply. FFRDC employees may cooperate or collaborate with eligible applicants within the limits imposed by applicable legislation and regulations. They may participate in planning, conducting, and analyzing the research directed by the applicant, but may not direct projects on behalf of the applicant organization. The institution, organization, or governance receiving the award may provide funds through its assistance agreement from the EPA to an FFRDC for research personnel, supplies, equipment, and other expenses directly related to the research. However, salaries for permanent FFRDC employees may not be provided through this mechanism.

Federal Agencies may not apply. Federal employees are not eligible to serve in a principal leadership role on an assistance agreement, and may not receive salaries or augment their Agency’s appropriations in other ways through awards made under this program.

The applicant institution may enter into an agreement with a Federal Agency to purchase or utilize unique supplies or services unavailable in the private sector. Examples are purchase of satellite data, census data tapes, chemical reference standards, analyses, or use of instrumentation or other facilities not available elsewhere. A written justification for federal involvement must be included in the application. In addition, an appropriate form of assurance that documents the commitment, such as a letter of intent from the Federal Agency involved, should be included.

B. Cost Sharing Requirements

Institutional cost-sharing is not required.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A. of this announcement.
2. Applications that do not substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement will be rejected. In addition, where a page limit is expressed with respect to parts of the application package (project narrative), pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
3. **Application packages must be received by the EPA or received through www.grants.gov, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this**

announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.

Application packages received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Frances W. Richards at (919) 541-3453 as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

4. Applications exceeding the funding limits described herein will be returned without review.
5. An applicant must demonstrate in the application package their knowledge and expertise in training high school students from diverse backgrounds and demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate classroom and laboratory facilities located within commuting distance of the U.S. EPA in Research Triangle Park. In addition, the applicants proposed program must be designed for students that live in the vicinity of Research Triangle Park, N.C. (see Section I.)

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application for this assistance agreement. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the assistance agreement, and which eligible organization(s) will be sub-awardees of the recipient. Sub awards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 40 CFR 30.2(ff). The recipient must administer the assistance agreement, is accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 40 CFR 30.2(gg), sub recipients are accountable to the recipient for proper use of EPA funding.

Coalitions may not include for profit organizations that will provide services or products to the successful applicant. For profit organizations are not eligible for sub awards under this announcement. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 40 CFR Part 30. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in the application/proposal. Moreover, the fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the application/proposal EPA approves does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements or compensation limitations.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain Application Package

EPA encourages applicants to obtain application materials and apply electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>.

Applicants may also download individual grant application forms from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at: http://www.epa.gov.ogd.grants/how_to_apply.htm.

To obtain a hard copy of materials, please send a written request to the Agency contact listed in Section VII of this announcement.

B. Forms of Application Submission

Applicants may submit their application packages in one of two ways: 1) Hard copy by express delivery service, regular mail, hand delivery, or 2) electronically through the Grants.gov website. All application packages must be prepared, and include the information described below in D, regardless of mode of transmission.

1. Hard Copy Submission

Submit a complete application package including all of the documents identified in Section IV.D of this announcement. The complete application must be sent through regular mail, express mail, major courier or delivered by hand. If hand delivery or using regular or express mail, send to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Attn: Frances W. Richards (Mail Code: B343-01)
109 T.W. Alexander Drive
Room B321-C
Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27711
Phone: (919) 541-3453

If using major courier, send to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Attn: Frances W. Richards (Mail Code: B343-01)
4930 Old Page Road
Room B321-C
Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27711
Phone: (919) 541-3453

2. Grants.gov Submission

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. ***Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.*** If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” tab on the left side of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package” to download the compatible Adobe viewer and obtain the application package. **To apply through grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader applications and download the compatible Adobe Reader version ([Adobe Reader applications are available to download for free on the Grants.gov website. For more information on Adobe Reader please visit the Help section on grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or \[http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp\]\(http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp\)](#)).**

Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-ORD-NHEERL-08-01, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.511), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Find Grant Opportunities” button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) by the date specified below.

Please submit *all* of the application materials described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to [*offices should provide the EPA URL link to the full announcement so applicants can easily access it if necessary*] or go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Find Grant Opportunities” on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Application Materials

The application is made through submission of the materials described below. ***It is essential that the application contain all information requested and be submitted in the formats described.*** The application package **must** include all of the following materials:

1. Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance: Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

This form will be the first page of the application. Instructions for completion of the SF-424 are included with the form. (However, note that EPA requires that the entire requested dollar amount appear on the 424, not simply the proposed first year expenses). The form must contain the original (or electronic) signature of an authorized representative of the applying institution. Please note that both her Principal Investigator and an administrative contact are to be identified in Section 5 of the SF-424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

2. SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs: Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of 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 amount should also be indicated on line 22.
3. EPA Form 5700-54, Key Contact Form: Should include the Principal, Co-Investigators and administrative contacts. A copy of this form should also be completed for major sub-agreements (contacts at the institution of primary co-investigators).
4. Project Narrative and Supporting Documentation. The project narrative and supporting documentation should be readable in PDF, MS Word or Word Perfect WP6/7/8 for Windows and consolidated into a single file. The project narrative, including those submitted electronically, must be submitted in English and must not exceed twenty (20) consecutively numbered 8.5 x 11 inch pages of single-spaced, standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. This page limitation shall include all items in (a) and (b) below and all text, tables, figures, references, attachments, and appendices **except** the attachments requested below for items c, d and e.

The project narrative should include the following components:

- a. Discuss your technical approach and organizational capabilities for accomplishing the objectives and purposes of the announcement as described in Section I, identify the environmental outputs and outcomes of the agreement, and the programmatic capability including personnel and facilities of the applicant to complete the requirements of the agreement. Applicants must submit a plan for tracking and measuring their progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes included in Section I of this announcement. The applicant must ensure that they address all of the criteria in Section V in their project narrative.
- b. Past Performance and Programmatic Capability:

Environmental Results Past Performance: Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements), and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please

indicate this in the application/proposal and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V. If you do not provide any response for this item, you may receive a score of 0 for this factor.

Programmatic Capability: Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the application/proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

c. Provide a Quality Management Plan that describes a quality system in terms of management and organizational structure, policy and procedures, personnel qualifications and training; procurement of items and services; documentation and records; computer hardware and software; planning; implementation of work processes; assessment and response; and quality improvement. Thus, the Quality Management Plan may be viewed as the “umbrella” document under which individual projects are conducted. The Quality Management Plan is used to demonstrate conformance to Part A requirements of ANSI/ASQC E4-1994. The Quality Management Plan must be approved and signed by the senior management of the organization. For more information, go to <http://www.epa.gov/quality>. Please note that Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) are not required since the student trainees will participate in EPA research projects having approved QAPPS.

d. Provide a Budget Narrative that includes detailed, itemized budget estimates for the project that is broken down into direct labor, fringe benefits, equipment, travel, other direct costs and overhead with summaries for each year and the total for the entire project. If a sub-agreement, such as a subcontract, is included in the application, provide a separate budget for the subcontract in the same format if the sub-agreement is greater than \$25,000. Include the total amount for the sub-agreement under “Contracts” in the master budget.

Please provide a description of the work that will be subcontracted and an explanation of why it must be subcontracted. Indicate whether the subcontracts will be awarded competitively or if not, what justification exists to make a non-competitive award. Any budget that includes

amounts for subcontracts of 40% or more of the total direct cost of the grant will be subject to special review. Refer to section on Partnerships for a further discussion of proposed subcontracts.

Please note that institutional cost-sharing is not required. However, if you intend to cost-share, a brief statement concerning cost-sharing should be added to the budget justification, and estimated dollar amounts must be included in the appropriate categories in the budget table.

Describe the basis for calculating the personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual support, and other costs identified in the itemized budget and explain the basis for their calculation. (Special attention should be given to explaining the “travel,” “equipment,” and “other” categories.) For any proposed equipment, identify any tangible non-expendable personal property to be purchased which has an estimated cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year. (Personal property items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 are considered supplies.) Tips for preparing the budget support can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>.

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for applications/proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant’s cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work

e. Biographical Sketches – 2 page curriculum vitae should be included for the Principal Investigator and any other key personnel identified in the application/proposal.

5. Indirect Cost Rate Proposal. Application packages should include a copy of the organization’s current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency.

Application Preparation and Submission Instructions

Documents 1 through 4 listed above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For documents 1-3, (SF 424, SF 424A and Key Contacts Form), click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action will move the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For document 4, (project narrative), you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your narrative application/proposal as described above and save the document to your computer as an MS Word, PDF or WordPerfect file. When you are ready to attach your project narrative to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach your project narrative (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your project narrative, you may click “Add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For item 5, the Indirect Cost Rate Proposal and other attachments such as the quality management plan, sketches, and budget narrative, use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach the documents.

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary. Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY08 – (grant category e.g., Assoc. Prog. Supp.) – 1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – FY 08 (grant category) – Back-up Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – FY08 (grant category) – 2nd Submission.”

Once your application/proposal package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

In the “Application Filing Name” box, your AOR should enter your organization’s name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY08), and the grant category (e.g., Assoc. Prog. Supp). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>. Application/proposal packages submitted thru grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from grants.gov*) within 30 days of the application/proposal deadline, please contact the individual identified in Section VII. Failure to do so may result in your application/proposal not being reviewed.

C. Submission Dates and Times

All hard copies of complete application packages must be received by Frances W. Richards, no later than 5:00 p.m., EST on **August 25, 2008**.

Application packages submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) *must* be submitted by your organization's AOR (Authorized Representative) no later than 11:59 p.m. EST on **August 25, 2008**.

Application packages received after the deadline will not be considered and will be returned to the submitter. Applicants that submit packages by hand may request a receipt from the Security Guard at the main entrance (Building C) of the U.S. EPA facility at 109 TW Alexander Drive, Research Triangle Park, N.C.

D. Subawards/Contracts

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the "recipient" even if other eligible applicants are named as "partners" or "co-applicants" or members of a "coalition" or "consortium". The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds

Funding may be used to provide sub-grants or sub-awards of financial assistance to fund partnerships provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for sub-awards or sub-grants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of these regulations. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their application/proposal. While applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their application/proposal, if they do so the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific contractor or consultant in the application/proposal EPA selects does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the application/proposal based solely on the firm's role in preparing the application/proposal.

Successful applicants cannot use sub-grants or sub-awards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the sub-awardee and sub-grantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and sub-recipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of "sub-

award” at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or “sub-grant” at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions.

E. Subawardees/subgrantees and Contractors

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate solely to the applicant's qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider (to the extent applicable under any relevant criteria) the qualifications, expertise, and experience of

i) an applicant's named sub-awardees/sub-grantees identified in the application/proposal if the applicant demonstrates in the application/proposal that if it receives an award that the sub-award/sub-grant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use sub-awards/sub-grants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.

(ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the application/proposal if the applicant demonstrates in its application/proposal that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of proposed sub-awardees/sub-grantees and/or contractors during the application/proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

F. Amendments to Request for Applications (RFA)

Amendments, if any, to this RFA will be posted on this website and on www.grants.gov and the due date for applications will be extended if deemed appropriate.

G. Confidentiality

By submitting an application in response to this solicitation, the applicant grants the EPA permission to make limited disclosures of the application to technical reviewers both within and outside the Agency for the express purpose of assisting the Agency with evaluating the application. Information from a pending or unsuccessful application will be kept confidential to

the fullest extent allowed under law; information from a successful application may be publicly disclosed to the extent permitted by law.

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of the application as confidential business information (for example, hypotheses or methodologies contained in the research narrative that the applicant wishes to protect from possible public disclosure). EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications or portions of applications they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, the EPA is not required to make an inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

H. Pre-Application Assistance and Communications.

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications/proposals, provide informal comments on draft applications/proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications/proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application/proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Selection Criteria

Each application that meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Section III will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria below. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their application submittal. Each application/proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible. The technical review will be conducted by a panel consisting of at least two non-EPA reviewers and one EPA reviewer. The purpose is to evaluate the scientific merit of the application/proposal and the capability of the applicant to complete the project as proposed.

Technical Evaluation Criteria:

Criteria	Points
<p>1. Project Summary/Approach: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors: (i)(15 pts) the extent and quality to which the application/proposal narrative includes a well-conceived approach for implementing and operating a research apprenticeship program for high school students encouraging them to pursue advanced degrees in math, science, the environmental sciences, engineering or other relevant fields while addressing all the requirements in Section I, Part B (Scope of Work) and Part C (EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs) (ii)(10 pts) the extent and quality to which the application/proposal demonstrates the applicants experience</p>	<p>35</p>

in recruiting and training high school students, and (iii)(10 pts) the extent and quality to which the application/proposal identifies an approach for the smooth transition of the students in the current program.	
2. Location: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the extent to which the applicant’s physical location will affect its ability to successfully achieve the objectives of this announcement as described in Section I and provide adequate classroom and laboratory facilities located within commuting distance of the U.S. EPA in Research Triangle Park, N.C.	15
3. Environmental Results: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under Federal agency assistance agreements performed within the last 3 years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (Assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperatives but not Federal contracts). Note: In evaluating applicants under this factor, 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). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance reporting history will receive a neutral score for this factor.	10
4. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability and Reporting Environmental Results: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant’s: (i) (14 pts) past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts), (ii)(6 pts) history of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts). Note: In evaluating applicants under this factor, 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). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance reporting history will receive a neutral score for this factor.	20
5. Staff Expertise/Qualifications: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate (i)(4 pts) the organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, (ii)(4 pts) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project and (iii) (2 pts) demonstrated capability to administer/monitor stipends.	10
6. Budget: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate whether the	10

applicants proposed budget is appropriate to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives and measurable environmental outcomes.	
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B. Review and Selection Process

Evaluation Review Process: The technical review panel shall consist of at least one internal EPA reviewer and at least two non-EPA reviewers. The technical review panel will review the applications against the criteria above identified as Technical Evaluation Criteria and rank the applications based upon this evaluation. The panel will provide the rankings and a recommendation to the Decision Official who is an ORD manager. The Decision Official will make the final selection based on the technical panel rankings and recommendation and may also consider programmatic priorities. In the event top rated applicants are scored essentially equal, preference will be given to an institution that is classified as a Historically Black College/University (HBCU).

Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA Award Official.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices

Following EPA's evaluation of application packages, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose application/proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

Notice of award will be made in writing by an official in the EPA Grants Office. Preliminary selection by the Decision Official in the Office of Research and Development does not guarantee an award will be made. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of EPA should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with an EPA Program Official. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the EPA Grants Award Official does so at their own risk.

EPA will promptly (within 15 days) notify in writing (postal or email) those applicants whose application is rejected. An unsuccessful applicant may request a debriefing to better understand the evaluated strengths and weaknesses of its application/proposal and the reason for rejection if other than technical merit. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications/proposals or applications and make no awards.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

A. Regulations and OMB Coverage

Grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations are subject to 40 CFR Parts 30 and 40 and OMB Circular A-122 for nonprofits and A-21 for institutions of higher learning.

Grants and agreements with state, local, and tribal governments are subject to 40 CFR Parts 31 and 40 and OMB Circular A-87.

B. Programmatic Terms and Conditions

Terms and conditions will be negotiated with the selected recipient covering the following requirements:

An acceptable study design document describing the observational study to be performed that adequately addresses issues identified in the planned EPA document on scientific and ethical approaches for observational exposure studies (to be completed in 2009).

An acceptable quality assurance document, i.e., Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), shall be due within 45 calendar days of completion of the final study design.

Approval of the protocol for protection of human subjects by an Institutional Review Board prior to the start of data collection

To further the assistance-agreement objectives of public support and stimulation, applicants must agree to make methods, models, and data resulting from this agreement accessible to the public and to EPA researchers.

The nature and extent of collaboration between EPA and the recipient.

OBM clearance shall be obtained prior to the collection of identical information from 10 or more non-Federal respondents.

C. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly Progress Reports: The selected recipient will be required to submit quarterly progress reports summarizing technical progress in achieving the environmental outputs and associated outcomes, difficulties encountered, and planned activities for the next quarter. Each report shall include a summary of expenditures.

Final Report: The selected recipient will be required to submit a final report within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance.

D. Non-profit Administrative Capability

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form, with supporting documents, contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

E. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Agency Contact (See Section VII).

F. Intergovernmental Review

Some states have an intergovernmental review requirement under Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” Item 16 of the SF424 refers to this requirement. Applicants should contact their State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out how to comply with the State’s process. The names and addresses of the SPOC’s are listed in the Office of Management and Budget’s home page at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html> to determine whether their state participates in this process and how to comply.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

The primary agency contact for this RFA is **Frances W. Richards** at:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Health & Environmental Effects Research Laboratory (MD B343-01)
109 T.W. Alexander Drive
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27711
Telephone: (919) 541-3453
Telefax: (919) 541-2581
E-mail: richards.frances@epa.gov

If unable to reach Frances Richards please contact Ms. Margaret Mann at:

Telephone: (919) 541-4896
Telefax: (919) 541-2581
E-mail: mann.margaret@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Questions

Questions must be submitted in writing to the primary contact listed in Section VII within 20 days of the effective date of the RFA. Do not attempt to seek information regarding this RFA from any source other than those identified in Section VII, as the information provided may be

erroneous. Answers to significant clarifying questions will be posted on a web site. If there is a material change to the RFA (i.e., an extension of the due date, increase or decrease in funding, change in criteria), then an amendment will be made to this RFA and posted on the website and on www.grants.gov.

Animal and Human Subject Research

a. Human Subjects: A grant applicant must agree to meet all EPA requirements for studies using human subjects prior to implementing any work with these subjects. These requirements are given in 40 C.F.R. § 26. For observational studies involving children, pregnant women, or nursing mothers please refer to Subparts B & D of 40 C.F.R. § 26. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations at 45 C.F.R. § 46.101 (e) have long required "...compliance with pertinent Federal laws or regulations which provide additional protection for human subjects." EPA's regulation at 40 C.F.R. Part 26 is such a pertinent Federal regulation. Therefore, the applicant's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval must state that the applicant's study meets the EPA's regulations at 40 C.F.R. § 26. No work involving human subjects, including recruiting, may be initiated before the EPA has received a copy of the applicant's IRB approval of the project and the EPA has also provided approval. Where human subjects are involved in the research, the recipient must provide evidence of subsequent IRB reviews, including amendments or minor changes of protocol, as part of annual reports.

b. Animal Welfare: A grant recipient must agree to comply with the Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544), as amended, 7 U.S.C. 2131-2156. The recipient must also agree to abide by the "U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals used in Testing, Research, and Training." (50 Federal Register 20864-20865 (May 20,1985))

This clause applies if a research facility (defined as any school (except elementary or secondary), institution, organization or person) receives funds under a grant from a federal agency for the purpose of carrying out research, tests, or experiments involving animals.

Data Access and Information Release

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with Federal funds and (2) cited publicly and officially by a Federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations at 40 C.F.R. 30.36.

Exchange Network

EPA, states, territories, and tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network, a secure, Internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. States, tribes and territories exchanging data with each other or with EPA,

should make the Exchange Network and the Agency's connection to it, the Central Data Exchange (CDX), the standard way they exchange data and should phase out any legacy methods they have been using. More information on the Exchange Network is available at www.exchangenetwork.net .