

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE)

ACTION: Request for Proposals (RFP) – Questions and Answers

RFP NO.: EPA/OAR/IO 06-01

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO.: 66.035

SUMMARY: The following are the Agency's response to questions/comments regarding Request for Proposal No. EPA/OAR/IO 06-01

QUESTIONS about RFP Round 1.

A. Is My Organization Eligible?

Questions 1: We are interested in application for grant 66.035 Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) Program. In the CFDA catalog, eligible entities are identified as "Local, public non-profit institution/organizations, Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments, sponsored organizations, Native American Organizations, Private nonprofit institutions/organizations, quasi-public nonprofit institutions/organizations, and interstate and intrastate organizations." Does this include local government? I appreciate any information you are able to provide.

Is a county government eligible?

Are local health departments eligible to apply for the CARE grant?

EPA Response: Yes. We amended the Request for Proposal to expand the list of eligible entities to include local government, colleges and universities. Prospective applicants are advised to refer to Amendment No. 001 recently posted on the EPA website.

Question 2: In Puerto Rico, nonprofits apply for certification under Section 1101 under the PR Internal Revenue Code and are not directed to apply under any other code, are they eligible as non-profits?

EPA Response: If you are legally recognized as a non-profit in Puerto Rico you are eligible. Similarly, if an organization qualifies as a non-profit organization under state law, that organization also is eligible.

Question 3: Could you tell me if Universities are eligible to apply for funding under the CARE grant solicitation that is currently out? It states that Universities are not considered non-profits for this solicitation, but seems to be encouraging them to partner.

EPA Response: Yes. See our response to Question #1 above.

Question 4: Are 501 C (4) non profits eligible to apply -or only 501(c) 3?

EPA Response: No. Non profits that meet the definition of non profit under OMB Circular A-122, with the exception of Nonprofits that fall under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Act and lobby, are eligible. Nonprofits can demonstrate eligibility by providing documentation of nonprofit status under the state law in which the organization was incorporated or by providing evidence that the IRS considers the organization exempt from taxation under 501(c)(3), 501(c)(6) or another provision of the IRS.

B. Is My Project Eligible for Funding?

Questions 5: We are a very rural area in on St. John in the US Virgin Islands with only 1500 people. We have stormwater pollutants entering ocean and damaging coral, need for rainwater cistern drinking water to be purified in homes, and an old auto junkyard needing detox and removal. Are any of these needs eligible?

I am wondering if unsewered communities that discharge to a drainage tile which ultimately goes to a drainage ditch and/or stream would be considered a toxic exposure and would qualify for this CARE program?

Are there grants available for meth cleanup?

Will the CARE Program fund initiatives related to lead poisoning prevention?

We would like to produce and distribute to the residents of our small community, a video outlining how they can prepare for and protect themselves from, these hazards in the event of a release of some kind. We were wondering if funding under the Care Program would be applicable to this application.

We currently have a proposition 12 grant to retrofit catch basins within our Ballona Creek Watershed to divert trash from the Ballona Creek. We would like to expand this project to retrofit more catch basins within the watershed and the CARE level II grant could be the answer. Can we apply for the CARE grant and join it with our Prop 12 grant to expand our scope of work?

EPA Response: We can not answer specific questions about whether one idea or another is eligible for funding. Not only is it unfair to the other applicants to prejudge a specific idea, it is hard to evaluate projects based on short descriptions. However, in order to give you some guidance we would remind everyone that, as stated in the RFP, under the CARE program communities form collaborative partnerships, develop a comprehensive understanding of all sources of risk from toxics, set priorities, and identify and implement projects to reduce risks through collaborative action at the local level. CARE's long term goal is to help communities build self-sustaining, community-based partnerships that will continue to improve local environments into the future. Therefore, a particular action could be eligible for funding if it was part of a larger CARE project but CARE does not simply fund the implementation of a specific project.

Questions 6: Do the projects considered for the CARE grants have to be multi-media, or can the projects be limited to one media (e.g. air)?

Is it correct to say that we cannot limit its program to multiple sources of contamination to a single medium (like a waterway) without having that medium come out on top during the risk assessment?

EPA Response: The CARE program is designed to be a multi media program. We expect communities with a Level I agreement to analyze toxic risks in all media. In order to pass the threshold criteria to be considered for a Level II agreement, a community would have to have completed a screening level, multi media assessments of toxics in their community. At that point a community which has examined risks from different media would be allowed to set their priorities as they see fit and those priorities could be in one media.

C. Application Kits

Question 7: Please forward grant Application Kit for CARE

EPA Response: Applicants are not required to complete an SF-424 or any other application forms at this time. A transmittal letter with original signature coupled with a proposal that includes the information requested in the Request for Proposals (RFP) is sufficient at this time. This transmittal letter does not count towards the 10-page proposal limit.

D. Number of communities per grant

Questions 8: Can a national organization apply for CARE funding? We are a non profit federation of independent groups operating in 19 cities in the United States. We currently receive funding through the OSHA Susan Harwood

grant program. One group administers the grant and contracts with the other groups to perform work under the grant. It seems to me that a similar situation could happen under the CARE program. One group would be responsible for record keeping, reporting and budgets, but each group would perform activities under the grant on a local level. Is this a possible scenario?

EPA Response: A national organization can apply for a CARE grant, provided that it otherwise meets the eligibility requirements and the application is for a specific community based project. CARE does not provide money to individual applicant – national or local - to distribute the money to a number of different projects.

QUESTIONS about RFP Round 2.

E. Details of the Proposal

Questions 9: Are the rules for length and font size different for hard copy submission and grants.gov submission? ex. I have found 2 contradictions in RFP: font size should be min. 10 pt and 12 pitch (?).

Also, letters of support will count in 10 page limit and will not count.

The only guidelines I found for formatting the proposal were the pg. limit, font size, and outline – are there any guidelines for spacing, margins, etc.?

EPA Response: We will make a technical amendment to the solicitation to be clear that minimum font size is 10 pt.

Letter of support or commitment do not count toward the ten page limit.

There are no guidelines for spacing and margins but we hope that applicants will use common sense and provide documents that are readable.

F. How many media is multimedia?

Question 10: In a previous project in the targeted community, we had assessed air and soil contamination, but not water. Are we required to examine all three media - air, soil, and water - or is two enough?

EPA Response: If you look at the threshold criteria it says: “the partnership must have completed a detailed examination of toxics in the community which includes more than one environmental media (air, water, etc.)” (emphasis added)”

However you should note that under Evaluation Criteria number 2: “Effectiveness looks at breadth and reasonableness of the examination of toxics and environmental pollutants in the community.” (emphasis added) So the evaluation will consider the extent of the analysis.

G. Border Communities

Question 11: 1. Will the community spanning across the border be eligible providing that all other criteria are met?
2. Are non-US institutions eligible to provide services/be partners providing that this is the only option/the most efficient option available?

EPA Response: Border communities are eligible for funding provided the money goes to an American grantee. Once an American grantee gets the money they can use a non-American entity to provide services if all other criteria for efficiently spending money are met.

QUESTIONS about RFP Round 3

H. Page Numbering

Question 12 On page 15 of the RFA it states that the pages must be numbered through the biographical sketches (is that where the page limit stops?) however the outline indicates that sections A-H should be included in the narrative section...so is it A-H that needs to be page numbered and limited to 10 pages or sections A-D? Sorry to be nit-picking but I want to be sure this is formatted correctly.

EPA Response: A detailed budget is included in the ten page limit. It does not need to be numbered. The material in sections F, G & H is meant to be helpful in completing the material asked for in section C.

I. Border Communities

Question 13 I am unsure what the difference is between a grant and cooperative agreement.

EPA Response: A cooperative agreement is a type of grant in which EPA has substantial involvement with the grantee and the project.

J. Voluntary Programs

Questions 14 In the RFP, section "5 Utilization of EPA voluntary programs", under the category two section, there is mention of two voluntary programs "pollution prevention" and "Make a Difference Campaign Programs". I can not find either of these two on the list of voluntary programs listed in the resources. Can you tell me the url to find descriptions of these two programs?

Are new proposals expected to include EPA's voluntary programs already in existence as part of their program goals/objectives?

EPA Response The URL for the pollution prevention program is: <http://www.epa.gov/p2/>. The URL for the Make a Difference Campaign is: <http://www.epa.gov/osw/students/choices.htm>. More importantly, applicants do not need, and are not expected, to decide at this point what voluntary programs they will use. The decision of what programs to implement need to be made collaboratively by the stakeholder partnership.

K. Number of Applications

Questions 14 1: Have you had more interest in Level 1 or Level 2 funding?
2: How many proposals did you receive last year total (Level I & Level II)? Thanks.

EPA Response We do not keep track of the number of people expressing interest in the program, much less whether they are interested in Level I or Level II cooperative agreements. Last year we received 135 proposals and there were substantially more Level I proposals than Level II proposals.

L. Forms to Include with Application

Questions 15 Are there any required supporting documents for ex. 990-forms, bi-laws, articles of incorporation, IRS 501(c)3 tax letters etc. that need to be included with the grant application. We will be applying for a level I grant.

EPA Response No, you do not need to include these forms with your application, although you may be asked for some of them if you are selected.