

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: "BROWNFIELDS 2009-2013 ANNUAL CONFERENCE"

ACTION: Request for Proposals (RFP) - Questions and Answers.

RFA NO: EPA-OSWER-OBLR-08-04

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.814

SUMMARY: The following are formal Agency responses to questions/comments received regarding the subject solicitation.

- 1. Will all questions and subsequent responses from the USEPA be made publicly available prior to the July 10, 2008 deadline for submitting a response? If so, do you have a date in mind for posting all questions and responses?**

EPA will respond to questions in writing from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions received from applicants and EPA's responses will be posted online at <http://www.epa.gov/oswer/grants-funding.htm>, weekly, or as necessary, until the closing date of the announcement. (*Refer to Section 4(F), Pre-proposal/Application Assistance and Communications.*)

- 2. The RFP mentions a travel scholarship program. Given the funding restrictions for this cooperative agreement, managing a meaningful travel scholarship program will be an extremely difficult proposition. Is the USEPA expecting the lead non-federal cosponsor to include a fully funded travel scholarship program as part of its proposal?**

Yes. Applicants must describe their plan for conducting a travel scholarship program and explain how they intend to finance the program. Financing may include direct funding from EPA, cost sharing (including in-kind services) allowable under 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.23, program income generated by fees or other charges (See, 40 CFR 30.24 and 40 CFR 31.25) that is not used for cost-sharing, or "leveraged" contributions from non-federal entities that an applicant intends to use to supplement EPA funding and its cost share.

If so is the travel scholarship program to be funded as a line item within the expected \$400,000 incremental award for each of the three national brownfield conferences?

Yes. However, the line item should include only costs for the travel scholarship program that will borne by direct EPA funding, the applicant's proposed cost share, and program

income. "Leveraged" contributions from non-federal entities that the applicant does not intend to include as cost-share would not be included in the line item describing the use of federal funds and funds subject to federal requirements for cost share and program income.

Yes, EPA does expect the lead non-federal cosponsor to include a fully funded travel scholarship program as part of its proposal. Applicants should fund the program as a line item in your budget proposal, itemizing the cost for each year of project performance. Please note, program income may be applied to travel scholarship costs.

3. Previous national brownfield conferences have not had a registration fee for attendees, although small fees have been charged for mobile workshops and other special events. The current RFP asks respondents to discuss how they would manage a "fee" for conference attendees. Is the USEPA expecting respondents to include a plan for a registration fee that all attendees would potentially pay in addition to any special fees for separate events such as mobile workshops, special trainings, or other activities outside the general educational program?

Yes. See page 12 of the RFA: "The successful applicant may charge a reasonable registration fee and use that fee as program income under 40 CFR 30.24(b)(2) or 40 CFR 31.25(g)(3) to meet its cost share requirement." EPA funding for the conference is limited and the Agency expects the non-federal co-sponsor to obtain additional financing for the conference through fees unless the applicant can demonstrate that it can effectively finance the conference, and meet its cost sharing obligation, without resort to charging fees.

Does the USEPA want the conference to have a general registration fee in addition to any smaller fees for mobile workshops and trainings?

Yes, unless the applicant has an alternative mechanism for supplementing EPA funds and meeting its cost share. See above.

Would the general registration fee be considered "program income?"

Yes, a general registration fee that provides an attendee with access to the educational components of the conference that are would be considered program income. Please note that any separate fees for independent events that are not financed with EPA funds or the applicant's cost share would not be subject to program income requirements. For example, if an applicant chose to finance an exhibit area, specific training course, or independent event such as a reception without charging its cooperative agreement for the costs of these activities, it could charge a separate fee(s) that would not be considered program income. The applicant, however, would bear the sole risk that the fees it charged for these separate activities would be adequate to cover its costs.

4. Efforts to green the conference have been ongoing since the 2006 event in Boston; however the current RFP does not mention greening as an evaluation criterion or as a component of the project proposal.

This is not an accurate characterization of the RFP. The RFP does include an opportunity for applicants to discuss conference greening activities. Please see page 4 of the RFA: “Describe how the conference will promote sustainable reuse of brownfields and prevent the creation of future brownfields. Describe how you will incorporate sustainable reuse themes into the conferences and how it will foster protection and restoration of the quality of the natural environment, improve the quality of life for the community, broaden prospects for future generations, and help reduce resource consumption.” As stated in the Evaluation Criteria, *Section 5(A), Project Description*, applicants may receive up to two points for this factor.

Should respondents assume that existing USEPA guidelines, federal regulations, applicable federal, state and local laws and any other existing guidance are to be followed?

Yes.

Alternatively, should respondents discuss how their efforts will demonstrate beyond compliance strategies for continuous improvement in conference greening activities?

See our response above regarding the criteria relating to reducing resource consumption.

5. Is EPA seeking external peer reviewers for this project?

No.

6. How many people does EPA anticipate attending these next three conferences?

Based on recent conferences, EPA expects 5000 or more participants at each conference.

7. Has this grant opportunity been available for previous conferences? If so, who have been the past recipients?

Yes. EPA awarded competitive funding to the International City County Managers Association to be the lead non-federal co-sponsor for Brownfields conferences that took place between 2003 and 2008. Prior to that, EPA funded the Engineers Society of Western Pennsylvania to be the lead non-federal co-sponsor.

8. For the travel scholarship program, would the grant funds be utilized for the funding of the scholarship program, or just the creation of the scholarship program?

The successful applicant may use grant funds, including the required cost share, for travel scholarships as well as necessary costs for creating the scholarship program. Applicants must describe their plan for a travel scholarship program and explain how they intend to finance the program. Financing may include direct funding from EPA, cost sharing (including in-kind services) allowable under 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.23, program income generated by fees or other charges (See, 40 CFR 30.24 and 40 CFR 31.25) that is not used for cost-sharing,

If the grant funds do not fund the scholarship program, would the grant recipient be expected to solicit donations to the scholarship program?

See above. Applicants may also solicit "leveraged" contributions from non-federal entities to supplement EPA funding and its cost share. However, as provided in OMB Cost Principles, fundraising costs are not allowable and may not be charged to the grant.

9. Regarding the in-kind contributions, we have staff members that are funded through our CDBG allocation; would their time on this project still be considered an in-kind contribution?

Yes. HUD Community Development Block Grants may be used to meet the 33% cost share requirement.

10. The grant opportunity mentions that an EPA contractor manages the logistics of the conference (hotels, etc.); who has been this contractor for previous conferences?

In the past, EPA has engaged Dyncorp to manage the logistics of the conference.