

REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS (RFP)

Organize the National Smart Growth Conference (EPA-OPEI-DCED-08-01)

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

AGENCY NAME: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation; Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: National Smart Growth Conference Request for Proposals (EPA-OPEI-DCED-08-01)

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: This is an initial announcement of a funding opportunity.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-OPEI-DCED-08-01

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.611, Environmental Policy and Innovation Grants, authorized under Delegation of Authority I-47.

DATES: Proposals must be received by U.S. EPA by 5PM East Coast Time, January 11, 2008. Award announcements are expected to be made by Spring 2008.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USEPA's Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED) focuses on smart growth issues of regional and national significance. Smart growth supports national environmental and public health goals by protecting sensitive watersheds, minimizing water quality impacts from development, reducing air emissions by increasing transportation choices, and encouraging clean-up and sustainable redevelopment of brownfields.

Through this RFP, the EPA is seeking proposals for organizing a national smart growth conference. This conference will be a multi-disciplinary event that focuses on diverse smart growth issues and attracts an audience of developers, builders, local elected officials, key local government staff, transportation professionals, planners, realtors, developers, architects, landscape architects, public health officials, law enforcement/crime prevention professionals, urban designers, lending institutions, parks and recreation professionals, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, advocates for youth and seniors, educators, youth leaders, and citizen activists. This conference should be at least a 3 full days and should be convened in January or February 2009. Proposals should specify that expected attendance at the conference will be over 1500 people and should provide documentation of how this will be achieved. In order to promote the conference effectively and attract a wide variety of attendees, the conference should be co-sponsored by numerous associations, organizations, and governmental entities whose members have an interest in smart growth.

EPA will award one cooperative agreement, which will involve substantial federal involvement. EPA expects to award \$80,000 for Year 1 with the possibility of additional, incremental funding of up to \$550,000 in total over a five year project period. Funding for future years is dependent on funding availability, agency priorities and applicant performance. Applicants should provide detailed descriptions of the activities proposed for the first-year under this competition, as well as a description of what activities, primarily focused on conducting a national conference each year, would be conducted in subsequent years (years 2-5) if additional funding is available.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Section 1: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1. Project Summary

USEPA's Development, Community, and Environment Division (DCED) focuses on smart growth issues of regional and national significance. Smart growth development practices support national environmental goals by protecting sensitive habitats and watersheds, reducing air emissions by increasing transportation choices, and encouraging cleanup and sustainable redevelopment of brownfields.

Smart growth is development that is characterized by a common set of principles:

- mix land uses;
- take advantage of compact building design;
- create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
- create walkable neighborhoods;
- foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
- preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas;
- strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
- provide a variety of transportation choices;
- make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective; and
- encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Through this RFP, the EPA is seeking proposals for organizing a national smart growth conference. This conference will be a multi-disciplinary event that focuses on diverse smart growth issues and attracts a diverse audience, including, but not limited to, developers, builders, local elected officials, key local government staff, transportation professionals, planners, realtors, developers, architects, landscape architects, public health officials, law enforcement/crime prevention professionals, urban designers, lending institutions, parks and recreation professionals, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, advocates for youth and seniors, educators, youth leaders, and citizen activists. This conference should be at least 3 full days and conducted in year one of the award. Proposals should specify that expected attendance at the conference will be over 1500 people and should provide documentation of how this will be achieved. In order to promote the conference effectively and attract a wide variety of attendees, the conference should be co-sponsored by numerous associations, organizations, and governmental entities whose members have an interest in smart growth. EPA has supported these types of conference activities in the past through competitively awarded cooperative agreements.

Activities eligible for funding include:

- (1) Establishing and leading a multi-disciplinary committee responsible for a national smart growth conference agenda planning. This team should be comprised of conference co-sponsors and should represent the variety of disciplines participating in the conference. The planning committee should be involved in: developing speaker lists, creating session topics and content, organizing mobile workshop tours of smart growth projects in the host city, and shaping the overall program.
- (2) Promoting the national smart growth conference and developing conference materials. This may include:
 - (A) Developing, printing, and distributing a "save-the-date" brochure and a registration brochure. Developing mailing lists for this distribution.

(B) Developing a conference webpage with information on: conference themes, sponsors, cosponsors, program information, target audience, invited and confirmed speakers, registration fees and policies, and an on-line registration form.

(C) Creating conference materials for attendees and distributed at the conference. These materials may include a final conference agenda and program.

(D) Creating materials for conference participants that may include final conference agenda, a list of all registered participants, an evaluation form, and a welcome letter (from the conference organizers/partners). These and all other relevant materials collected from speakers and other sources shall be made available online to participants to minimize the amount of printing.

- (3) Coordinating speaker and staff travel including airfare reservations, rental car, hotel room, train fare, etc.
- (4) Handling conference registration and staffing the conference itself.
- (5) Determining and implementing strategies for making the conference carbon-neutral by minimizing production costs, seeking locally grown foods for meals and snacks, purchasing carbon offsets, and others.
- (6) Tracking the impacts of the conference. This might include tracking changes in development decisions in communities from which representatives attended, determining the degree to which the conference presentations serve as a learning tool, and/or tracking dissemination of conference presentations and proceedings to appropriate audiences.

1.2. Expected Results

In compliance with EPA Policy Order 5700.7, the outputs and outcomes of applicants' proposals must support EPA's strategic objective (in the Agency's 2003 – 2008 Strategic Plan) to sustain, clean-up, and restore communities and the ecological systems that support them. The term "output" refers to an activity or effort and associated work product 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 the funding period. Examples of outputs include but are not limited to: organizing and putting on the conference itself, the number of attendees at the conference; the development of proceedings related to the conference; the number of sessions and accompanying presentations; collaboration occurring as a result of meetings; and/or training modules and the number of individuals trained.

The term "outcome" means changes or benefits resulting from activities and outputs. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. There are two major types of outcomes - end outcomes and intermediate outcomes. End outcomes are the desired end or ultimate results of a project or program. They represent results that lead to environmental/public health improvement. A change in water quality and resultant change in human health or environmental impacts are examples of end outcomes.

Intermediate outcomes are outcomes that are expected to lead to end outcomes but are not themselves "ends." Given that the end outcomes of an assistance agreement may not occur until after the assistance agreement funding period, intermediate outcomes realized during the funding period are an important way to measure progress in achieving end outcomes. For example, advancement in the knowledge of smart growth techniques can be viewed as an intermediate outcome to measure an end outcome of restoring communities and the ecological systems that support them. Other end outcomes might include change in development patterns in communities due to learning and idea exchanges that occur at the conference.

1.3. Required Smart Growth Expertise

The applicant must demonstrate clear understanding of the smart growth issues addressed by the project and must evidence a firm commitment to the principles of smart growth (see Section 3.3 of this announcement). Smart growth is development that benefits the environment, public health, the economy, and the community. It is characterized by a common set of development principles:

- mix land uses;
- take advantage of compact building design;
- create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
- create walkable neighborhoods;
- foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
- preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas;
- strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
- provide a variety of transportation choices;
- make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective; and
- encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Additional background information about smart growth can be found at:
<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth>.

1.4. Alignment of This Funding Solicitation With EPA's Strategic Plan

The Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED) in U.S. EPA's Office of Policy Economics and Innovation is issuing this request for proposals (RFP). DCED focuses on smart growth issues of regional and national significance. Smart growth development practices support integrated environmental management approaches that both protect local ecosystems and support ecologically compatible development. These practices support national environmental and public health goals by protecting sensitive watersheds, minimizing water quality impacts from development, reducing air emissions by increasing transportation choices, and encouraging clean-up and sustainable redevelopment of Brownfields. Through its focus on smart growth, this solicitation supports EPA's strategic objective to sustain, clean up, and restore communities and the ecological systems that support them (Objective 4.2 in EPA's 2003-2008 Strategic Plan).

1.5. Statutory Authority

As outlined in Section 3.3, all proposed activities must be authorized under one or more of the following U.S. EPA grant authorities: Clean Air Act section 103 (b) (3); Clean Water Act section 104 (b) (3); Solid Waste Disposal Act section 8001, as amended; Toxic Substances Control Act section 10; Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act section 20, as supplemented by P.L. 106-74; and Safe Drinking Water Act sections 1442 (a) and (c). These statutes authorize grants for research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies.

Section 2: AWARD INFORMATION

2.1. Expected size, number and scope of awards

Under this funding cycle, U.S. EPA expects to have approximately \$80,000 available for proposals and expects to award one (1) assistance agreement. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals for first-year activities for approximately \$80,000 or less. Final grants may be negotiated for project periods of up to five years and may be set up for incremental funding, with funding for future years dependent on funding availability, agency priorities and applicant performance. The ceiling for a 5-year agreement is \$550,000.

2.2. Eligibility of existing projects

Applications for renewal or expansion of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new awards.

2.3. Type of assistance agreements to be awarded

The award will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements entail substantive involvement in the funded project by U.S. EPA. Substantive involvement activities will include: Substantive involvement activities will include: US EPA review and approval of project phases and workplans before they are initiated; participation in and collaboration on selected phases of the work including coordination with the national planning committee; provide input and guidance on the prioritization and selection of plenary and breakout sessions; marketing and advertising the conference; in accordance with 40CFR 31.36(g) review of proposed procurements, and/or review and approval of all draft and final products.

2.4. Anticipated start dates and period of performance

The expected time span for any cooperative agreements awarded under this solicitation will be from May 2008 through May 2013.

2.5. Partial funding and additional awards

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

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 4 months after the original selection decisions.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no award.

Section 3: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants under the CFDA 66.611 are “States, territories, Indian Tribes, interstate organizations, intrastate organizations, and possessions of the U.S., including the District of Columbia; public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private nonprofit institutions; and individuals.” Individuals must demonstrate the same level of competence and meet the same requirements as any other eligible applicant. Applicants must be located in, and project activities must be conducted within, the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the United States. Nonprofit organizations described in section 501 (c) (4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. Applications from ineligible applicants will not be considered.

3.2. COST-SHARING OR MATCHING

There are no match or cost-sharing requirements. However, the effectiveness with which the project budget uses EPA funds and leverages matching funds will be considered when proposals are evaluated (see Section 5 of this announcement). Matching funds can include cash or in-kind contributions from the applicant or from project partners. Any dollars counted towards a formal match must be for allowable costs. Allowable costs for nonprofit organizations are defined in OMB circular A-122; allowable costs for public entities are defined in OMB circular A-87. Applicants proposing to use matching funds must document when the funds will be available and what source they are from (see Section 4.2, “confirmation of partner participation and/or match”). If matching funds are not documented in the proposal, they will not be considered in evaluating the proposal.

3.3. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Only one application will be accepted per applicant. To be eligible, applicants must meet the eligibility criteria under section 3.1 and must meet all of the threshold criteria listed below. Threshold criteria will be applied on a pass/fail basis. Failure to meet any one of them will render an application ineligible. Ineligible applications will not be reviewed. Applicants will be notified within 15 calendar days of ineligibility determinations.

U.S. EPA will use the smart growth definition outlined in Section 1 ("Funding Opportunity Description") to apply Threshold Criteria 1 and 2.

Threshold Criterion 1: Smart Growth Focus

The proposal must directly respond to the issues, subjects, and activities targeted by this RFP and explained under the "Funding Opportunity Description" section. The proposed activities and products must result in or encourage smart growth. The proposed activities and products also must support EPA's strategic objective to sustain, clean up, and restore communities and the ecological systems that support them.

Threshold Criterion 2: Smart Growth Expertise and Commitment

The applicant must demonstrate clear understanding of the smart growth issues addressed by the project and must evidence a firm commitment to the principles of smart growth.

Threshold Criterion 3: Allowable Activities

The activities proposed must be authorized under one or more of the following U.S. EPA grant authorities: Clean Air Act section 103 (b) (3); Clean Water Act section 104 (b) (3); Solid Waste Disposal Act section 8001, as amended; Toxic Substances Control Act section 10; Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act section 20, as supplemented by P.L. 106-74; and Safe Drinking Water Act sections 1442 (a) and (c). These statutes authorize grants for research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies. The project activities must advance the state of knowledge or transfer information. The term "research" may include the application of established practices when they contribute to learning about an environmental concept or problem. The term "demonstrations" can encompass the first instance of a pollution control or prevention technique, or an innovative application of a previously used method.

Threshold Criterion 4: Environmental Focus

The project's general focus must be one that is specified in the statutes listed under threshold criterion 3. For most statutes, the project must address the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of air, water, or solid/hazardous waste pollution. In the case of grants under the Toxic Substances Control Act or the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, the project must "(carry) out the purposes of the Act." The overarching focus of the proposed project must be on the statutory purpose of the applicable grant authorities, which in most cases is "to prevent or control pollution." Proposals must clearly describe how the activities proposed will prevent or control pollution.

Threshold Criterion 5: Serve a Public Purpose

Proposals must clearly demonstrate that the proposed activities will (1) be of primary benefit to the applicant organization (i.e. support their overall mission and goals), and (2) serve a non-federal audience.

Threshold Criterion 6: Complete Applications That Are Submitted on Time

a. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section 4 of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section 4 with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

b. In addition, proposals must be received by the EPA or received through www.grants.gov, as specified in Section 4 of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline

published in Section 4 of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section 4 of the announcement by the submission deadline.

c. Proposals 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. For hard copy submissions, where Section 4 requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Kevin Nelson at 202-566-2835 as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

Threshold Criterion 7: Funding Ceiling

Applicants that request more than \$80,000 for project year one and/or request more than \$550,000 over the 5 year period will be rejected.

Section 4: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1. How To Get Application Materials

This announcement provides all of the instructions needed for preparing your proposal. If applicants are submitting a paper copy of their proposal, there are no standardized federal application forms or kits to be used at this stage. However, there are format and content requirements which are described below under section 4.2, "Content and Form of Application Submission" and the address for paper submissions is located in section 4.7. Applicants also have the option to apply electronically through www.grants.gov. Anyone filing electronically will be required to fill out the cover sheet of a standard federal form (SF424) electronically. Requirements for electronic submissions are discussed in Section 4.3.

Paper copies of this announcement can be obtained by contacting the EPA personnel listed in section 7. Electronic copies of this announcement will be available on the DCED web site (www.epa.gov/smartgrowth).

Section 4.2: FORM AND CONTENT OF APPLICATIONS

To be considered complete and eligible for review, all proposals must include (a) a cover letter; (b) a summary information page; (c) a project description; (d) a budget and budget narrative; (e) supplemental documentation of staff expertise, approach to awarding subawards and subgrants, and programmatic capability; (f) confirmation of partner participation and/or match (if applicable), and (g) a description of related funding. Project descriptions should not exceed 10 pages (see below for additional details). The following format is required for all proposals:

4.2(a). Cover letter (does not count against page limit)

The cover letter that accompanies your proposal must be signed by an official with the authority to commit your organization to the project and should be written on your organization's official letterhead.

4.2(b). Summary information page (does not count against page limit)

The summary information page should be one-page long and include the following information:

- the title and number of this request for initial proposals (*provide it for them in parenthesis*)
- project title and location
- applicant name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address

- name and title of project contact (including how to reach if different from above)
- type of applicant organization (e.g., nonprofit, local government, state government, etc.)
- how you first learned of this RFP (e.g., reviewing www.grants.gov, colleague referral, etc.)
- summary budget information (amount requested from U.S. EPA; amount and source of any matching funds)
- 5 to 10 line abstract of the proposal

4.2(c). Project description (no longer than 10 page sides)

The project description must provide a concise overview of the project. It should include a preliminary workplan outlining all major tasks, products, timetables and expected outputs and outcomes (including environmental results) for the life of the project. The narrative must address how the proposal meets eligibility, threshold and selection criteria (see Sections 3 and 5) and how project results will be measured. If other project partners or funding sources are involved, their role and contribution must be clearly defined and documented. Applicants should provide detailed descriptions of the activities proposed for the first-year under this competition, as well as a description of what activities, primarily focused on conducting a national conference each year, would be conducted in subsequent years (years 2-5) if additional funding is available.

In reviewing the project description, reviewers will not consider any pages over the 10 page side limit. Project descriptions must use no smaller than 10 point type, and should have page margins all-around of at least one inch.

4.2(d). Budget and budget narrative (does not count against page limit)

The project budget must include all relevant direct costs (e.g., personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and contractual). Indirect costs must also be included. Entries under each category must be explained in a budget narrative.

4.2(e). Supplemental Documentation (does not count against page limit)

Applicants must include supplemental information regarding project staff, planned subgrants and subawards, and programmatic capability.

Staff profiles: The applicant must include short profiles of all principal staff who will have a major role in the project. Where applicable, this includes principal staff from partner organizations. These profiles must specifically address each individual's experience with smart growth issues and their areas of expertise related to the project. These profiles will be used to help assess whether the applicant meets threshold criteria related to smart growth expertise.

Subgrants and subawards: Subgrants and subawards may be used to fund partnerships with non-profit and governmental entities. If applicants plan to award subgrants or subawards, their supplemental documentation must include a description of the award process they will use. (See Section 4.6)

Programmatic capability (including past performance and experience reporting on environmental results): Applicants must also include supplementary information documenting their programmatic capability and their experience measuring and reporting on project performance and environmental results (see Section 5.1). This should include a list of similar projects funded by EPA and any other federal agencies in the past 3 years. For each project, applicants should discuss their performance history. This includes how the projects were conducted and completed, whether all goals and objectives were met, what the final products and results were, and what their history was of reporting their progress towards achieving expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs). If there were progress issues, applicants should demonstrate how well they documented what the issues were and how they were resolved. If

applicable, supplementary information on programmatic capability should also include discussing adverse audit or grants administration findings for the 3 years preceding application under this solicitation. For each project included in the section on programmatic capability applicants must provide contacts for EPA to obtain additional information. If applicants have not received federal funding before, they must provide other information that demonstrates their ability to successfully manage grant funds. This might include, but is not limited to, administration of programs funded through state grants or foundations.

4.2(f). Confirmation of partner participation and/or match (does not count against page limit)

Applicants who are partnering with other organizations, agencies or institutions must include a letter from the partner, on partner letterhead, indicating the partner's role in the project. Each partner letter must be signed by an individual with the authority to commit the partner to the project. This is mandatory if the partner is contributing funds or in-kind services to the project. Letters confirming partner participation must be included in the initial proposal package and will not be accepted separately. Proposals relying on partner participation which are missing documentation of that participation will be evaluated as if the undocumented partners were not involved in the project.

If an applicant is planning on awarding EPA funds received under this solicitation to a proposed partner, competitive procurement requirements apply. Proposed partnerships of this kind must identify which eligible organization (defined in Section 3.1) will be the recipient of the assistance agreement, and whether any eligible organization(s) being brought in as a partner will receive subawards, subgrants, or be considered as contractors. Including the name of the organization you intend to partner or contract with in your initial proposal is not sufficient documentation of competition. (see Section 4.5, "Funding Restrictions", for additional information).

4.2(g). Description of related funding (does not count against page limit)

Building on the programmatic capability section, if applicants have received funding in the past 3 years to conduct related projects or for activities related to the current proposal, they must (1) provide a list describing the projects and identifying the funders and (2) explain how EPA funds awarded under this solicitation will complement completed, current or planned activities being supported by other sources. This includes projects supported by other US EPA programs.

4.2(h). Additional information regarding how applications should be submitted and what will happen following selection

If applicants are submitting paper applications, they must submit one original and three copies of their proposal (as defined above) If applicants are submitting electronically through www.grants.gov, they must follow the directions in Section 4.3 below. Fax and direct email submissions will not be accepted.

Following selection, successful applicants will be required to complete a formal application for federal assistance (which will include standard federal forms such as the SF 424 and associated documentation as well as a more detailed project narrative and workplan). These formal application materials should not be submitted unless requested by EPA. Applicants should be aware that there may be a very quick turnaround required (e.g., 2 to 3 weeks) if they are asked to submit a formal request for funding assistance.

4.2 (i). Confidential business information.

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or part of their applications/proposals as confidential business information. U.S. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of their applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not

required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

Section 4.3: INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION THROUGH WWW.GRANTS.GOV

Applicants may choose to submit their proposals electronically through www.grants.gov. If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal/application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and 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. 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 and Instructions” to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package and instructions for applying under this announcement using grants.gov. You may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OPEI-DCED-08-01, or the CFDA number (CFDA 66.611), in the space provided. Then complete and submit the application package as indicated. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the button “Application” 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 go to: EPA opportunities).

Application/proposal materials submitted through grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically.

If you have any technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>.

4.3(a): APPLICATION MATERIALS FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS

If applying through www.grants.gov, all of the application materials described below must be submitted:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424). Complete form on www.grants.gov. No attachments necessary.
2. Project Narrative Attachment Form. Under this form, the following documents will need to be attached:
 - Cover letter (see Section 4.2(a))
 - Summary Information page (see Section 4.2(b))
 - Project description (see Section 4.2(c)).
3. Budget Narrative Attachment Form. Under this form, the budget and budget narrative (See Section 4.2(d)) will need to be attached.
4. Other Attachment Form. Under this form, the following documents will need to be attached:
 - Supplemental Documentation (See Section 4.2(e))
 - Confirmation of partner participation and/or match (See Section 4.2(f))
 - Description of related funding (See Section 4.2(g)).

Applicants should submit attached documents in Microsoft Word format or in Portable Document Format (PDF). If submitting a letter(s) confirming partner participation, which requires a signature and official letterhead, applicants should attach a PDF document with an electronic signature.

Electronic proposals which rely on partner participation that is not documented in the electronic submission will be evaluated as if the undocumented partner were not involved in the project.

Note: Microsoft Vista and Word 2007 Users

Please note that Grants.gov does not currently support the new Microsoft Vista Operating system. The PureEdge software used by Grants.gov for forms is not compatible with Vista. Grants.gov will be reviewing this new product to determine if it can be supported in the future. In addition, the new version of Microsoft Word saves documents with the extension .DOCX. The Grants.gov system does not process Microsoft Word documents with the extension .DOCX. When submitting Microsoft Word attachments to Grants.gov, please use the version of Microsoft Word that ends in .DOC. If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

4.3(b): ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

This section discusses how applicants should prepare, attach, and submit all documents on the Grants.gov website. EPA encourages all applicants applying electronically to view the training demonstration on “How to Complete an Application Package,” available at: http://www.grants.gov/images/Application_Package.swf.

On the www.grants.gov Grant Application Package Page, there is a “Mandatory Documents” box. In this box, there are four items: Application for Federal Assistance (SF424), “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” “Budget Narrative Attachment Form,” and “Other Attachment Form.” The paragraphs below describe what goes into each of those forms.

For the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), applicants must click on the form and then click “Open Form” below the “Mandatory Documents” box. All fields highlighted in yellow must be completed. Optional fields and completed fields will appear in white. An error message will appear if information in the field is incomplete or invalid. Click “Save” when the form is completed. When the document is completed, click on the name of the completed form in the “Mandatory Documents” box, and then click on the button that says “Move Form to Submission List.” This action will move the document to the “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For the remaining required items, electronic files will need to be attached to the appropriate forms. These documents should be prepared on the applicant’s computer and saved as an MS Word or PDF file. When ready to attach to the application package, use the following instructions:

Click on the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File” and then individually attach each of the required documents (cover letter, summary information page, and project description), using the window that appears. Click on “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view. Enter a brief descriptive title of the project (no longer than 40 characters) in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename.” This must be done for each attached document. Once the necessary documents are attached, click “Close Form.” 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.”

To attach the budget and budget narrative, click on the “Budget Narrative Attachment Form” and follow the steps outlined above.

To attach the required supplemental documentation, confirmation of partner participation and/or match, and description of related funding, click on the “Other Attachment Form” and follow the steps detailed above.

Once all of the forms/attachments appear in the “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission,” click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. An application package is similar to a single file, made up of the cover page and (possibly) many forms. **Data at the form level will be retained when you close a form.** Although data at the form level will be saved, the applicant must click the save button to ensure that the entire application package is saved. If the individual preparing the application is not the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), he/she will need to share the file with the AOR for submission through www.grants.gov. This can be accomplished by either giving the AOR access to the files through a shared drive or emailing the entire package. Only the AOR can submit the application package to EPA through www.grants.gov. All other software programs should be closed before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

In the “Application Filing Name” box, the AOR should enter the organization’s name (abbreviate where possible). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the “Grant Application Package” page, the 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 you have technical difficulties while applying electronically, refer to <http://www.grants.gov/CustomerSupport> or call 1-800-518-4726.

Section 4.4: SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

U.S. EPA must receive proposals by 5PM East Coast Time, January 11, 2008. No late proposals will be accepted. Postmarks or meter stamps are not sufficient documentation of on-time delivery. Proposals submitted electronically through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically and are subject to the same deadline.

Applicants will not be automatically notified regarding whether their proposals were received.

Section 4.5: INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

All applicants should be aware that formal applications for federal assistance (i.e., SF 424 and associated documentation as described above) may be subject to intergovernmental review under Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Applicants may contact their state's Single Point of Contact for further information. There is a list of these contacts at the following web site: <http://whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

Section 4.6: FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

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 subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 [CFR](#) Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. 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 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to

identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards 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 subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of [OMB Circular A-133](#), and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

EPA encourages applicants to compete any subgrants they award. As stated under Section 4.2(e), applicants must provide information on the competitive process they will use if they plan to award subgrants. 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 partnership. Subrecipients are accountable to the recipient for proper use of EPA funds.

Funding is only available for the activities authorized under one or more of the U.S. EPA grant authorities cited in Section 3.3, threshold criteria 3 and 4 ("allowable activities" and "environmental focus"). Funding will not be permitted for lobbying, entertainment expenses, or other unallowable costs under the OMB circulars. Allowable costs for nonprofit organizations are defined in OMB circular A-122, for public entities in OMB circular A-87, and for universities in OMB circular A-21. Preward costs and equipment costs are only allowable with the written consent of EPA.

Any program income generated under assistance agreements awarded under this solicitation must be applied to eligible activities under the award.

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants 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.

Section 4.7. PAPER COPY SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Delivery address for paper proposals

The delivery address for submitting your proposal will vary depending on whether you are mailing it or arranging for hand delivery.

If you are sending your proposal via hand delivery (e.g., UPS, Federal Express, courier or some other means) send it to:

Kevin Nelson
 USEPA—West Building
 1301 Constitution Avenue NW
 Room 1416A
 Washington, DC 20004
 (202) 566-2835

If you are mailing your proposal, send it to:

Kevin Nelson
 USEPA
 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
 Mailcode 1807T
 Washington, DC 20460

Please note that there may be substantial delays in conventional mail service to U.S. EPA due to heightened security screening.

Section 5: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1: SELECTION CRITERIA

If applications meet the threshold criteria in Section 3, they will be evaluated against the criteria listed below. Only applications meeting the threshold criteria in Section 3 will be evaluated against the criteria in this section.

Proposals will be scored against each of the evaluation factors using a numerical scale of 0 through 5, with zero being low and 5 being high. All factors will be weighted equally with the exception of factor 2, which will receive triple weighting.

Criterion	Maximum Points Per Criterion (with weighting)
<p>1. Degree to which the applicant demonstrates expertise and experience in the smart growth issues associated with this RFP. The applicant needs to be a nationally recognized resource on smart growth and its implementation. This expertise will ensure that a smart growth leader, who can inspire partnerships and effective collaboration among organizations related to smart growth, will be able to infuse the conference with the most innovative ideas and concepts.</p>	5
<p>2. Degree to which the proposing organization is an appropriate representative for the issues dealt with in the assistance agreement, is likely to be viewed as an authority on the subject, or is partnering with an organization that meets these requirements. In evaluating this criterion, EPA will take into account the applicant’s ability to reach a national audience with the tools, practices and techniques developed under the assistance agreement. For example, a successful applicant will have a demonstrated capacity to plan, organize and hold a national conference on smart growth of similar subject matter and size compared to the most recent national smart growth conference.</p>	15

<p>3. Degree to which the applicant demonstrates excellence with regard to the proposed approach for each activity area. This criteria aims at demonstrating success at accomplishing tasks associated with the methodology proposed by the applicant for organizing and hosting the conference. For example, if the project will focus on breakout sessions, plenary sessions and tours, the applicant should explain how their experience has led them to effectively hone this format for a successful conference. In terms of collation building and partnerships to support the conference, the applicant should illustrate how they have worked to build teams and consensus for national events associated with building a smart growth agenda.</p>	5
<p>4. Degree to which the project budget effectively uses EPA funds. In evaluating budget effectiveness, EPA will take into account how much of the funding requested from EPA will be used for activities directly related to the project as opposed to overhead and indirect expenditures.</p>	5
<p>5. Degree to which the project effectively leverages and uses matching funds. Under this criteria, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will compliment activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a voluntary match or cost share if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants.)</p>	5
<p>6. Quality of approach to tracking and measuring project results. Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress towards achieving expected outputs and outcomes. In this context, "outputs" are activities, efforts, or work products that: (1) will be produced by a specific date; and (2) are directly related to an environmental goal or objective. Outputs can be quantitative or qualitative and must be measurable. "Outcomes" are the results of carrying out a project. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic, and must be quantifiable.</p>	5
<p>7. Environmental results past performance. 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 Federally and non-federally funded agency assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements), and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. If applicants have not received federal funding before, they must provide other information that demonstrates their experience in this area. 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).</p>	5
<p>8. Level of programmatic capability. Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into</p>	5

<p>account the applicant's: (i) past performance in successfully completing and managing 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 performed within the last 3 years, (ii) history of meeting reporting requirements under 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 performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, (iii) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and (iv) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. If applicants have not received federal funding before, they must provide other information that demonstrates their experience in areas of past performance (sub criteria 8.(1) and 8(4). Note: In evaluating applicants under this factor, the Agency 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).</p>	
<p>9. Strategies for a carbon neutral conference. Proposals will be evaluated based on creative and effective solutions for implementing policies that will reduce the carbon footprint associated with producing the conference.</p>	<p>5</p>

5.2. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

EPA will evaluate proposals using the selection criteria above based on the information provided in the proposal and related attachments. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel of EPA staff. Final funding decisions will be made by EPA management based on the panel's recommendations.

5.3. ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT AND AWARD DATES

Award announcements are expected in Spring 2008.

Section 6: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1: AWARD NOTICES

Successful applicants will receive an official notice of award from EPA's Grants Administration Division.

EPA will announce successful recipients on the U.S. EPA smart growth web site (www.epa.gov/smartgrowth). This information will be posted within 30 days after U.S. EPA's Grant Administration Division issues a written offer of award to the recipient. U.S. EPA anticipates that awards will be announced in Spring 2008.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via mail or e-mail in Winter 2008.

Applicants who do not pass threshold or eligibility screening will be notified via e-mail within 15 calendar days of the determination of their ineligibility. 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). Copies of these procedures can be obtained from the EPA contacts listed under Section 7. They also can be accessed directly on-line at the following address:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>.

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award.

6.2: ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

6.2 (a): Pre-award review for administrative capability

Non-profit applicants recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to a pre-award review for administrative capability consistent with Sections 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 (Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards). A paper copy is available from the EPA contacts listed under Section 7. The policy can be accessed on-line at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf. Non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to EPA's Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form contained in Appendix A of that policy. This review may include assessing the adequacy of administrative systems for financial management, procurement, property management, reporting and record-keeping.

6.2 (b): Compliance with standard terms and conditions

All successful applicants must comply with the standard requirements, terms and conditions of EPA assistance agreements. Funded activities must be allowable under EPA statutory authority (see section 3).

6.2 (c): Pre-award costs

Applicants are not authorized to begin performance on a project until they have received their official award document from the EPA's grant office. No preaward costs may be incurred without EPA approval; preaward costs are undertaken at the recipient's risk.

6.2 (d): Requirement for Dun and Bradstreet Number

All assistance agreement recipients must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number in order for their formal SF424 grant applications to be processed and approved. A DUNS number can be obtained by calling 1-866-705-5711. A DUNS number is not required at the time proposals are submitted in paper copy under this RFP. However, a DUNS number IS required if you are submitting your proposal electronically.

6.3: REPORTING

Recipients will be required to submit quarterly reports detailing their progress towards achieving agreed-upon products and outcomes. If their projects involve program income, quarterly reports will be required on how much income has been earned, from what activities, and how it is being spent. Recipients will have to participate in annual reviews of their projects with their U.S. EPA project officer. A project officer will be designated at the time of award and will work in partnership with the recipient throughout the life of the assistance agreement. Recipients will be required to submit a final technical report 90 days after the expiration of their assistance agreement.

Section 7: AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have questions about this solicitation, please contact:

Kevin Nelson
US EPA
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, 1807T
Washington, DC 20460
202-566-2835
nelson.kevin@epa.gov

EPA staff will not review draft proposals or provide potential applicants advice on how to respond to selection criteria. However, they will respond to questions regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to proposal submission, and requests for clarification. Answers to frequently asked questions will be posted on the U.S. EPA smart growth web site (www.epa.gov/smartgrowth) so that all applicants will have the opportunity to review them.

Section 8: OTHER INFORMATION

Both initial proposals and formal funding applications (SF 424's) are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. This means that anyone can request, and receive, copies of them. Therefore, as described more fully in Section 4.7, applicants must clearly mark any portion of their applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant that would otherwise be required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.