

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, REGION 7
EPA-R7WWPD-03-007**

Notice of Request for Initial Proposals for Projects to be Funded from the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Allocation (CFDA 66.436 - Surveys, Studies, Investigations Grants and Cooperative Agreements for Water Quality Projects authorized by the Clean Water Act, Section 104(b))

SUMMARY

EPA is soliciting initial proposals to implement one of Region 7's water quality initiatives. Water quality standards are set by States, Territories, and Tribes. They identify the uses for each water body, for example, drinking water supply, contact recreation (swimming), and aquatic life support (fishing), and the scientific criteria to support that use. A TMDL is the sum of the allowable loads of a single pollutant from all contributing point and non-point sources. This calculation must include a margin of safety to ensure that the water body can be used for the purposes the State has designated. The calculation must also account for seasonal variation in water quality.

Federal funds are available for projects that lead to the completion of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or contribute toward the development of a TMDL or multiple TMDLs under Section 104 (b)(3) of the Clean Water Act.

Background

Over 40% of our assessed waters still do not meet the water quality standards states, territories, and authorized tribes have set for them. This amounts to over 20,000 individual river segments, lakes, and estuaries. These impaired waters include approximately 300,000 miles of rivers and shorelines and approximately 5 million acres of lakes -- polluted mostly by sediments, excess nutrients, and harmful microorganisms. An overwhelming majority of the population - 218 million - live within 10 miles of the impaired waters.

The Clean Water Act requires, states, territories, and authorized tribes to develop lists of impaired waters. These impaired waters do not meet water quality standards that states, territories, and authorized tribes have set for them, even after point sources of pollution have installed the minimum required levels of pollution control technology. The law requires that these jurisdictions establish priority rankings for waters on the lists and develop TMDLs for these waters.

1. Amount of Funding Available

EPA, Region 7 plans to award 4-12 grants for projects that result in a TMDL or contribute toward the development of a TMDL in any of the four States of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, or Nebraska. The total funding for all of these grants is anticipated to range from \$300,000 to \$500,000.

2. Right to Reject Proposals

EPA Region 7 reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

3. Matching/Cost Share Requirements

There are no cost share requirements for these projects.

4. Project Period Time frame

Project duration should not exceed three years.

5. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include State, Tribal, County, City or Local Environmental Health Departments, Colleges, Universities, or other Institutions of Higher Education, Community-Based Organizations or Coalitions.

EPA will review only one (1) project proposal per applicant for any given project. Applicants may, however, submit more than one (1) proposal provided that the proposals are for separate and distinct TMDL projects or TMDL activities.

Applicants with existing agreements under this program are eligible to compete with proposals for new awards.

6. Proposal Submittal - Due Dates

All initial proposals should be e-mailed, mailed or delivered to:

Environmental Protection Agency
Attention: Ms. Patricia Reitz (WWPD/WRPB)
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

E-mail: reitz.patricia@epa.gov

EPA will consider all initial proposals which are post-marked by the U.S. Postal Service, hand-delivered, or electronically delivered to the Agency, or include official delivery service documentation indicating EPA acceptance from a delivery service, on or before the deadline published in the request for initial proposals. Electronic proposals may be e-mailed to the above-referenced e-mail address. The due date for proposals is on or before 4 p.m. Central Time, June 9, 2003. Initial proposals received after the due date will not be considered for funding.

7. Statutory Authority and Applicable Regulations

TMDL project grants are awarded under the authority of Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act.

These projects are subject to EPA's General Grant Regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 "Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations"; 40 CFR Part 31 "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments".

8. Allowable Costs

EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other federal grants,

lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87; A-122; and A-21, as appropriate. Unallowable costs include the purchase/lease of vehicles; office furniture or costs associated with federal agency staff travel. Ineligible costs will be reduced from the final grant award.

9. Federal Requirements

An applicant whose proposal is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10). EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and work plan content prior to award. In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

10. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

11. Pre-application Assistance

None planned.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

12. Purpose of This Request Is for Initial Proposals

The EPA is requesting initial proposals for projects which lead to the completion of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or contributions toward the development of a TMDL or multiple TMDLs under Section 104 (b)(3) of the Clean Water Act.

13. High Priority Areas for Consideration

EPA will award grants for projects in Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska) which result in a TMDL or contribute towards the completion of a TMDL.

14. Request for Initial Proposal Format and Contents

Initial proposals should be limited to five pages (not including Standard Form SF-424, and SF-424A). Page size should be 8 ½ x 11" with font size of 12 points or larger. Full application packages should not be submitted at this time. Failure to meet the format and content criteria will eliminate the initial proposal from consideration. The contents of the initial proposal are to include the following information/forms:

- ! Completed Page 1 of Standard Form SF-424*, Application for Federal Assistance.
- ! Completed Page 2 of Standard Form SF-424A*, Budget Information-Section B (See Allowable Cost).

Background

- ! Purpose of or need for project
- ! Objective(s) of project
- ! Statement regarding whether this proposal is a continuation of a previously funded project. If so, please provide the assistance number and status of the current grant/cooperative agreement.
- ! Existing activities or conditions supporting project
- ! Description and parameters of project
- ! Description of coordination efforts associated with project
- ! Any connection(s) to lawsuit commitments
- ! Segment(s) and pollutant(s) included in TMDL(s)
- ! Estimated date for final TMDL submittal

Scope

- ! Detailed identification and discussion of project tasks
- ! Detailed identification and discussion of deliverable products/outputs (include format of product/output and number of copies to be provided)
- ! Description of how public participation will be provided for, encouraged, and assisted (40 CFR 25.11)
- ! Time line, schedule, and deadlines associated with each project task, deliverable products/output, EPA coordination meetings, peer review process, major project meetings and quarterly report submittal dates
- ! Clearly identify project start date and project finish date
- ! Identification of Quality Assurance Plan submission if environmental research/data collection is to be performed and if the applicant does not have an EPA approved Quality Management Plan

Project Management

- ! Designation of primary project contact and manager of the project
- ! Staffing plan (who is assigned to what tasks, their qualifications, and how the objectives will be met)
- ! Role of other parties (agencies and sub-contractors) in performing tasks/meeting objectives
- ! Acknowledgment that quarterly reports will address the following items as appropriate:
 1. progress to date
 2. difficulties encountered during the reporting period
 3. actions planned to correct difficulties encountered
 4. changes in staffing plan
 5. detailed accounting of expenses incurred to date

Budget

The budget for projects must include a separate itemization of the total project cost (federal grant amount, non-federal matching contribution) for salaries, fringe benefits, supplies, equipment, contract work, travel, training, indirect costs (if applicable) and any other related expenses.

SF-424 and SF-424A forms along with additional grant information may be obtained at this web address:

<http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/index.htm>

15. Preliminary Eligibility Screening Requirements

To be eligible for consideration, applicants **must meet** all of the following criteria. Failure to meet the following criteria will result in the automatic disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration:

1. Be an applicant who is eligible to receive funding under this announcement;
2. The proposal must meet all format and content requirements contained in this notice; and
3. The proposal must comply with the directions for submittal contained in this notice.

16. Evaluation Criteria

Initial proposals will be judged based on the following criteria and their weights:

1. The proposal demonstrates that the project directly supports establishment of particular TMDLs - **(30 percent)**
2. The proposal demonstrates that the project outcome will advance the overall process of TMDL development regionally or nationally **(30 percent)**
3. The proposal responds to specific lawsuit commitments made by EPA **(15 percent)**
4. The proposal describes project management which ensures that the outcome can be achieved with the time and funding proposed **(15 percent)**
5. The project is a continuation of a previously funded EPA phased grant **(5 percent)**
6. The applicant is in good standing with past grant performance **(5 percent)**

17. Evaluation Process

All proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and ranked by a selected panel of EPA reviewers based on the criteria stated above. Proposals will be screened to make sure that eligibility requirements are met and will be disqualified if they do not meet the eligibility requirements.

18. Selection Process

The funding decision will be made from this group of top rated initial proposals based on additional factors such as:

1. Geographical distribution of funds; and
2. Project distribution across Region 7 and Agency strategic priorities.

19. Selection Official

Final selection of initial proposals will be made by the Region 7 Director, Water, Wetland and Pesticide Division.

20. Notification

The Region 7 EPA office will mail acknowledgments to applicants upon receipt of the proposal. Once initial proposals have been reviewed, evaluated, and ranked, applicants will be notified regarding the outcome of the competition.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted on the Region 7 EPA website address www.epa.gov/region07/economics at the conclusion of the competition. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications.

21. Dispute Resolution Process

Procedures at 40 CFR 30.63 and 40 CFR 31.70 apply.

22. Confidential Business Information

Applicants should clearly mark information contained in their proposal which they consider confidential business information. EPA reserves the right to make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR, Subpart B. If no such claim accompanies the proposal when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the applicant.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patricia Reitz, TMDL Regional Coordinator at reitz.patricia@epa.gov. Telephone 913-551-7674