

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, REGION 7, WATER, WETLANDS, AND PESTICIDES
DIVISION - EPA-R7WWPD-04-009**

Notice of Modification to Request for Initial Proposals for Projects to be Funded From the Water Quality Cooperative Agreement allocation **NOTE:** This notice reflects changes to Sections 3B, 3C, 4B, 4F, 5B, and 6B. The remainder of this notice includes the content of the initial announcement and remains unchanged. (CFDA 66.463 - Water Quality Cooperative Agreements). These proposals support developing, implementing, and demonstrating innovative approaches relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution..

Proposal due date - July 7, 2004 (60 days from announcement)
If selected, Application due date - August 13, 2004 or two weeks from notification of successful initial proposal

SUMMARY

EPA is soliciting initial proposals for Water Quality Cooperative Agreement activities which support the Clean Water Act 104(b)(3). These proposals support developing, implementing, and demonstrating innovative approaches relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution.

1. Funding Opportunity Description

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 is soliciting initial proposals from State water pollution control agencies, colleges and universities, Native American Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia, individuals and other public or nonprofit organizations, including community-based or volunteer organizations interested in applying for Federal assistance for Water Quality Cooperative Agreements (CFDA 66.463) under the Clean Water Act (CWA) section 104(b)(3) for projects in EPA Region 7, specifically Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. The list of eligible recipients must match the CFDA description. The regulations governing the award and administration of Water Quality Cooperative Agreements are 40 CFR Part 30 (for institutions of higher learning, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations) and 40 CFR Part 31 and 40 CFR Part 35, Subparts A and B (for States, Tribes, local governments, intertribal consortia, and interstate agencies).

Assistance agreements awarded under Section 104(b)(3) may only be used to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effect, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution.

A. Watershed & Community-Based Priorities for Consideration:

Region 7 will award projects for innovative research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies that focus on watershed and community-based approaches. These projects can range from statewide targeting schemes to local watershed-based projects. Emphasis will be placed on approaches for

- watershed monitoring and assessment strategies and/or implementation;
- development of comprehensive watershed management plans;
- develop and/or pilot stormwater management plans that encourage on-site infiltration and retention with water quality benefits;
- Inventory of Aquatic Resources (streams, wetlands, and/or special aquatic sites) to identify, classify, and/or prioritize for protection strategies; and

- conduct educational outreach on low impact development (LID) and its potential uses.

B. Geographic Area Priorities for Consideration:

EPA Region 7 will provide priority consideration to projects that focus on the following geographic areas. Addressing more than one area will result in more points in the evaluation process.

Proposed projects should involve:

- 303 (d) Listed Waterbodies - name the watershed, waterbody and the reason for listing;
- Urban Areas - an incorporated area and the densely-settled surrounding area (urban fringe) that together have a residential population of at least 50,000 and an overall population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile;
- Outstanding Natural Resource Waters - as defined by state/tribal water quality standards; and
- Watersheds in Tribal lands.

2. Award Information

EPA Region 7 Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division intends to award an estimated \$638,000 to eligible applicants through assistance agreements ranging in size from \$50,000 to \$100,000 (total project cost). From the initial proposals received, EPA estimates that 6 -10 projects may be selected to submit full applications. Should additional funding become available to award, the Agency may award additional grants based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process without further notice or competition.

Both initial and renewal proposals will be accepted for consideration. Eligible activities should be of a relatively short time frame, 1 to 3 years, with tangible results. All projects should achieve and demonstrate results. Water Quality Cooperative Agreements are not awarded to fund ongoing State/ Tribal program activities or any other ongoing program activities.

The Agency reserves the right to reject all Proposals and make no awards.

Should additional funding become available for award the Agency may award additional grants based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process, without further notice or competition.

EPA Region 7 will work closely with the recipient organization during the finalization of the workplan to determine EPA's involvement with the project. If it is determined that there will be no substantial EPA involvement, the assistance agreement will be awarded as a grant. If it is determined substantial involvement is anticipated between EPA and the recipient organization during the performance of the approved activities, the assistance agreement will be awarded as a cooperative agreement.

3. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants:

Assistance under this program is generally available to State water pollution control agencies, Native American Tribes, and Inter-Tribal Coalitions or Consortia, public and private universities and colleges, individuals, and other public or private non-profit institutions (community- based or volunteer organizations), as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

In order to be eligible, Tribes must be Federally recognized, although "Treatment as a State" status is not a requirement. Intertribal consortia that meet the requirements of 40 CFR part 35.504 are eligible for direct funding. Interstate agency and intertribal consortia projects must be broad in scope and encompass more than one State, Tribe, or local government.

Applicants who have an existing agreement under this program are eligible to compete for new awards.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement:

A minimum non-Federal match of 5% of the total project cost is required which may include in-kind contributions. The match must be for an allowable cost and may be provided by the applicant or an eligible partner organization or institution. The match may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions and other non-cash support. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. If the match is provided by a partner organization, the applicant is still responsible for proper accountability and documentation.

Other Federal money cannot be used as the match for this grant program unless authorized by the statute governing the award of the other Federal funds. However, Indian Tribes can use funds provided under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.) to provide the required matching funds to the extent authorized by that Act and implementing regulations. Matching funds are considered grant funds. They may be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the work plan. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds also apply to the use of matching funds.

All grants are subject to Federal audit.

C. Other Eligibility Criteria:

The primary implementation of all projects must occur within the four states of EPA Region 7 specifically Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, or Nebraska.

Preliminary Eligibility Screening Requirements

To be eligible for consideration, applicants must meet 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 meets all eligibility requirements in Section 3 A and C of this announcement;
2. The proposal must address one or more of the priorities outlined in Section 1 A and B;
and
3. The proposal must comply with the directions for submittal contained in this notice in Section 4C Submission Dates and Times.

4. Proposal and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package:

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and 424A, are available at <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/appforms.htm> and by mail upon request by calling the Grants Administration Division at (202) 564-5320 or by contacting the EPA Region 7 Competition Advocate (see Section 7 for Agency Contact Information). If you have questions, contact the Regional Office Water Quality Cooperative Assistance Grant Coordinator (see Section 7 for Agency Contact information) or visit the regional

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

B. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Full application packages should not be submitted at this time. It is recommended that confidential information not be included in the initial proposal. However, if confidential information must be included, it must be clearly marked as such. EPA will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR part 2, Subpart B(16). If no such claim accompanies the initial proposal when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the applicant.

Initial proposals must be limited to approximately five pages and typewritten (not including Standard Form SF-424, SF-424A, continuation statement, Cover Page and support letter(s)). Page size should be 8 ½ x 11 inches and easily readable with a conventional font of 12 points or larger, double spaced and numbered pages.

The contents may vary slightly with different types of projects. **If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the initial proposal.** If an assistance agreement application does not contain sufficient information or it is unclear, it is less likely to be selected for funding.

All initial proposals must include:

1. Completed Page 1 of Standard Form SF-424*, Application for Federal Assistance. (Not counted in page limit).
2. Completed Page 2 of Standard Form SF-424A*, Budget Information-Section B (Not counted in page limit).
3. Detailed itemization of the amounts budgeted by individual Object Class Categories (Not counted in page limit).
4. 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. (Not counted in page limit.)
5. Cover Page (Not counted in page limit) including
 - a. Project Title,
 - b. Name of Applicant,
 - c. Project Contact,
 - d. E-mail Address and/ or Phone Number,
 - e. Geographic Location, and
 - f. Total project cost and dollars requested.
6. Project narrative containing
 - a. Brief description of environmental issue(s) of concern;
 - b. Project Goals and Objectives (describe in measurable terms the environmental issue to be addressed);
 - c. Project Tasks (outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals); and
 - d. Schedule (when you expect to complete significant steps and milestones).
 - e. Describe how the project will address
 - i. innovative approaches,
 - ii. one or more of the high priority areas of concern (See Sections 1A&B),
 - iii. state, local, and/or other stakeholder participation; and/or
 - iv. opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding.
 - f. Project Results/Evaluation (describe how you will measure and evaluate the results of your project), (Specified in Section V Below).
7. Brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of workers and staff qualifications (no resumes are required).
8. Brief description of the applicant organization, experience related to the area of interest, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to implement the proposed

- project.
9. Any support letters should specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist the project. (Not counted in page limit).

*See Section 4A for additional information for obtaining Standard Forms 424 and 424A.

C. Submission Date and Time:

EPA will consider all initial proposals which are received from the U.S. Postal Service, hand-delivered, or include official delivery service documentation indicating EPA acceptance from a delivery service, **to arrive at EPA Region 7 on or before the deadline of 5 p.m., Central Standard Time, July 7, 2004.** Initial proposals received after the due date will not be considered for funding.

Submission Address

All initial proposals must be mailed or delivered to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
WWPD/ WPIB
Attention: Carl Stevens
901 N 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

D. Intergovernmental Review:

The final application 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. This program is eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance if the State has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding. Additional information can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html> .

E. Funding Restrictions:

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 "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Tribal Governments"; A-122 "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations"; and A-21 "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions". Ineligible costs will be reduced from final grant award.

Construction

Construction projects, except for the construction required to carry out a demonstration project, and acquisition of land, are not eligible for funding under this program.

Environmental Controls

New or on-going programs to implement environmental controls are not eligible for funding under this program. Grants are not to be awarded to fund ongoing State program activities. For example, State National Permit Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting and Clean Water Act Section 401 certifications are not eligible for funding under this program.

F. Other Submission Requirements:

Pre-Application Assistance

None planned. If you have general questions regarding this request for proposals, contact the Regional Office Water Quality Cooperative Assistance Grant Coordinator (see Section 7 for Agency Contact information) or visit the regional website at <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/index.htm>.

Public Participation

EPA regulations require public participation in various Clean Water Act programs including grants (40 CFR Part 25). Each applicant for EPA financial assistance shall include tasks for public participation in their project's work plan submitted in the grant application (40 CFR 25.11). The project work plan should reflect how public participation will be provided for, assisted, and accomplished.

5. Proposal Review Information

A. Criteria:

All initial proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and weights:

1. The proposal describes an identified water quality issue and the importance of that issue to meeting federal, state, tribal, local and community requirements, expectations, and needs. The proposal has clearly stated, measurable goals and objectives. The proposal describes how meeting the goals and objectives will address the environmental issue(s) and what products, deliverables, environmental results, and measurable outcomes will be accomplished. A schedule or timeline is included. Demonstrates ability to conduct and manage the grant or describes the system to hire or obtain the requisite experience. (20 pts)
2. Project demonstrates a watershed and community-based approaches as described in Section 1A (such as watershed monitoring and assessment strategies and/ or implementation; development of a comprehensive watershed management plan; development and/or pilot stormwater management; inventory of aquatic resources; and conduct educational outreach on low impact development). (20 pts)
3. Project addresses priority geographic area(s) for consideration as described in Section 1B. (20 pts)
4. Project demonstrates applicant involvement/ commitment through significant financial and/ or personnel contribution, and involvement of partners is strongly encouraged. (15 pts)
5. Newly-developed and innovative watershed projects. (15 pts)
6. Project presents innovative approaches or solutions. Proposal demonstrates potential for replicability or transferability to other communities, locations, and/or sectors. (10 pts)
7. Success of Previous Projects. Only for applicants who have received prior EPA funding.

The last criterion is applied only to prior grant recipients. The last criterion does not add value in the rating process for prior EPA grant recipients to give an automatic advantage over new applicants. The last criterion, does, in cases of inadequate and inappropriate prior grant performance, lower an applicant's ranking; it allows consideration of poor past performance in the evaluation of current grant proposals.

B. Proposal Review and Selection Process:

All proposals will be screened by EPA staff prior to review to determine if they are eligible, complete, and in accordance with the instructions provided in this notice. If any of the required

elements of the application package are not submitted, EPA may choose to contact the applicant. Failure to include or provide any of this information could result in disqualification and removal from the selection process.

A selected panel of EPA reviewers will review the proposals and select the most competitive projects for funding based on the above evaluation criteria listed above. Both the quality and quantity of the applications will play a significant role in the selection of grants for funding.

The funding decision will be made from the group of top rated initial proposals based on the following additional factors:

1. Geographical distribution of funds;
2. Diversity of projects;
3. Watershed size; and
4. Cost of project.

Final selection of initial proposals will be made by EPA Region 7 Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division Director.

6. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notice:

Applicant(s) will be notified by mail after final decisions have been made. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance except at the recipient's own risk of EPA approving pre-award costs.

Successful applicant(s) will be invited to submit a complete application package prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10) that will be due by August 13, 2004 or two weeks after being notified. Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the completed application will be provided at that time.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and work plan content prior to award. All final workplans must include the information required in 40 CFR § 35.107 and 35.507.

An approvable workplan is required to include:

1. the work plan components to be funded under the grant;
2. the estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each work plan component;
3. the work plan commitments for each work plan component and a time frame for their accomplishment;
4. a performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with §35.115 of this subpart; and
5. the roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA in carrying out the work plan commitments.

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.

All completed applications must be addressed to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
WWPD/ WPIB
Attn: Carl Stevens
901 N 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

Applicants that are not invited to submit a complete application will be notified by mail. Decisions under this solicitation are subject to the applicable dispute resolution process under 40 CFR 30.63 and Part 31, subpart F, and 40 CFR 31.70.

Upon receipt of a complete application, work plan, and budget, the recommendations for funding of the award will be made to the Regional Administrator. When all funding decisions are complete, a grant award notification will be issued to the recipients. This is the conclusion of the competitive award process and begins the grant performance period.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted on the EPA Region 7 website address http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7_grant_opportunities.htm at the conclusion of the competition. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Statutory Authority and Applicable Regulations

Water Quality Cooperative Agreement projects are authorized under the Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3). Regulations governing the award and administration of Water Quality Cooperative Agreements are 40 CFR part 30 for institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations; 40 CFR part 31 for state and local governments; 40 CFR part 35, subpart A for state, interstate, and local government agencies; and 40 CFR part 35, subpart B for tribes.

DUNS number

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with the full application for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

Peer Review

Most documents or products prepared for and intended for public distribution under EPA Region 7 assistance agreements will be subject to the peer review process. Some products/documents produced under this grant program may be exempted from peer review process. Assistant agreement applicants should allow an eight-week time period in project schedules for each product which is subject to the peer review process. Concurrent review of multiple project products is possible. Scheduling preliminary submission of draft documents to the project officer throughout the project period will facilitate the peer review process.

Quality Assurance

If environmental research including direct measurements or data generation, environmental modeling, compilation of data from literature or electronic media, and data supporting the design, construction, and operation of environmental technologies is to be performed as part of the funding agreement, a Quality Assurance Project Plan and submission date to EPA for approval must be identified unless the organization can show a previously EPA approved Quality Management Plan. No federal funds may be expended or requested for reimbursement for data collection or environmental sampling activities prior to submittal, and approval, of the Quality Assurance Project Plan to/by the EPA Project Officer.

Confidential Business Information

Applicants should clearly mark information contained in their application 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 application when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without

further notice to the applicant.

Copyrights

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) The copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) Any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

Data Sharing

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan. Additionally, recipients of grants for monitoring projects will be required to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (short for STOrage and RETrieval). STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water quality, biological and other physical data of known quality for use by State environmental agencies, EPA and other Federal agencies, universities, private citizens, and many other organizations. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET or monitoring data made available in the Advisory Council for Water Information (ACWI) Core Monitoring Data Element Standard (or Data Exchange Template) will facilitate exchange of monitoring data between EPA and its partners. Applicants may also want to contact their State agency responsible for entering data into the system. Information on STORET is at <http://www.epa.gov/storet> and information on the standard is at <http://www.epa.gov/edr>.

C. Reporting:

The successful applicant(s) will be required to submit to EPA either electronic or hard copy performance reports, at a frequency required by their grant conditions and/ or approved workplan, to illustrate their progress and document any issues or challenges in accordance with 40 CFR 31.40 and a final report in accordance with 40 CFR 31.41. An EPA Project Officer will work with the applicant to achieve the project goals and to provide necessary technical assistance.

7. EPA Region 7 Agency Contacts

For Further Information Contact:

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