

REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS (RFP)

EPA-OPEI-07-03:

Educational Campaign on Policy Barriers to Redevelopment of Vacant Properties

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

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

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: Educational Campaign on Policy Barriers to Redevelopment of Vacant Properties, Request for Proposals

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

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-OPEI-07-03

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.611.

DATES: Proposals must be received by the EPA or through www.grants.gov on or before August 27, 2007, 5:00 p.m. EDT. Awards announcements are expected to be made by Autumn 2007.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Development, Community, and Environment Division in U.S. EPA's Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation is soliciting proposals for an analytical and outreach program addressing the policy barriers to redeveloping vacant properties. Proposals must be received by the EPA or through www.grants.gov on or before August 27, 2007, 5:00 p.m. EDT.

EPA is seeking proposals to educate critical state decision- and policy-makers on policy and practical barriers to the redevelopment of abandoned and other vacant properties. EPA expects to award one assistance agreement under this solicitation, with approximately \$50,000 available for first-year funding and a ceiling of \$250,000 for the life of the agreement. A final agreement will be negotiated for a five-year budget and project period, with future funding dependent on the availability of funds, agency priorities, and applicant performance.

The award will be in the form of a cooperative agreement, which entails substantial involvement by the EPA. Eligible applicants 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. Cost-sharing is encouraged, but not required. Only one application per applicant is permitted.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Section 1: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1. Project Summary

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is being issued by the Development, Community, and Environment Division (DCED) in U.S. EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation with funding support from EPA's Office of Underground Storage Tanks (OUST). These programs are soliciting proposals for an effort that will create the basis of, and will begin, a national educational campaign for state-level decision-makers on the costs of abandoned gas stations and other vacant properties and on the opportunities for supporting their redevelopment.

During the first year of this agreement, EPA envisions that:

- 1) No fewer than 2 and no more than 5 states will be strategically selected to be the focus of an educational campaign on vacant property redevelopment.
- 2) An analysis will be conducted of the selected states' policies and practices that may act as barriers to redeveloping vacant properties.
- 3) A set of decision- and policy-makers will be strategically identified and selected to participate in educational sessions about policy barriers to redeveloping vacant properties in the target states.
- 4) Critical decision-makers (identified under step 3 above) at the state level or on a state-wide basis in the selected states will be educated regarding the benefits of, and strategies for, redeveloping vacant properties.

An applicant's proposal should describe an approach to conducting a 5-year campaign to educate state-level decision-makers on the costs of abandoned gas stations and other vacant properties and on the opportunities for supporting their redevelopment. This description should, at a minimum, include:

- a) an approach to selecting no fewer than 2 states in the first year of the agreement, and no fewer than 8 additional states in the remaining years of the agreement, to be the focus of the educational campaign;
- b) an approach to analyzing states' barriers to redeveloping vacant properties in the first year of the agreement (see item #2 above);
- c) an approach to selecting state decision-makers to participate in educational sessions during the first year of the agreement (see item #3 above);
- d) educational techniques and approaches that would be used to educate state decision-makers on the benefits of, and strategies for, redeveloping vacant properties in the first year of the agreement; and
- e) additional activities that would be conducted in years 2 through 5 of the agreement.

1.2. Expected Results

"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, must be quantifiable, and may not be achievable within the project funding period. All outputs and outcomes proposed for a project funded under this RFP must support EPA's strategic objective to sustain, clean-up and restore communities and the ecological systems that support them.

Potential outputs during the first and/or ensuing years of the assistance agreement might include evaluations of the effectiveness of the educational sessions, outreach to decision-makers in additional states, and/or white papers or publications on the state-level practices that influence vacant property redevelopment. These papers might include analyses of individual state policies; analysis of the applicability of a given solution to an individual state; analyses of the impacts or implications of a policy change within a state; analyses of vacant property redevelopment within states; and/or analyses of other related issues.

Expected short-term outcomes of this assistance agreement include greater awareness among decision- and policy-makers and other relevant groups of existing policy barriers to vacant property development and the opportunities inherent in adopting an innovative vacant redevelopment strategy. Longer-term expected outcomes include policy changes at the state and local levels that enable economical and environmentally-sound redevelopment of vacant properties. The ultimate outcomes expected from this assistance agreement include reduced travel-related air emissions, preservation of greenspace, more efficient use of energy and other community resources, reductions in contamination of groundwater, remediation of contaminated sites, and improvements in community safety and quality-of-life.

Applicants should clearly define expected outcomes and outputs in submitted proposals and award winners will be expected to track outcomes as the work progresses. Wherever possible, outcomes should be tracked quantitatively.

1.3. Required smart growth expertise

Successful applicants should demonstrate expertise in smart growth and experience working collaboratively to find common ground on growth and development issues. 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:

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 sustainable redevelopment of Brownfields and other vacant properties.

Specifically, returning abandoned and vacant properties to productive use helps protect the environment and meet the goals of smart growth in several ways:

- a) the majority of these properties are located near existing infrastructure, making more efficient use of investments that communities have already made in roads, power, and other utility services.
- b) the regionally central location of many abandoned properties means that if they are reclaimed, there is likely to be less resulting auto travel when compared to a similar amount of development at the edge of an urban area. This will generate less auto emissions.
- c) redevelopment of these properties takes some growth pressure off of greenfield sites such as wildlife habitat and farmland at the edge of urban areas.
- d) restoring vacant and abandoned properties helps to foster safety in the community by reclaiming derelict property that could attract criminal activity or be subject to arson.
- e) many vacant and abandoned properties become dumping grounds for everything from old tires to hazardous chemicals.
- f) vacant and abandoned properties include many brownfields – sites with some level of environmental contamination. Reuse of the properties will result in remediation of more of these sites.

Thus, through its focus on the reuse of vacant properties, 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 \$50,000 available for proposals and expects to award one assistance agreement. 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. A ceiling of approximately \$250,000 for a five year agreement is suggested, with the assumption that the annual funding would be in increments of \$50,000. Applicants should provide detailed descriptions of the activities proposed for the first-year under this competition, as well as a description of what follow-up activities would be conducted in subsequent years if additional funding is made available.

2.2. Eligibility of existing projects

Applications from existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new awards.

2.3. Type of assistance agreements to be awarded

Awards will be in the form of cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements entail substantive involvement in the funded project by U.S. EPA. This may include U.S. EPA review and approval of project phases and workplans before they are initiated; participation in and collaboration on selected phases of the work; review of proposed procurements in accordance with 40 CFR 31.3(g); 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 Autumn 2007 through Autumn 2012.

2.5 Partial funding and additional awards

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, 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, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection. EPA also reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

Section 3: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants include 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 U.S., the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the U.S. 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.

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 a 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

Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section 4.2 of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section 4.2 with respect to the proposal and/or parts of the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

In addition, proposals must be received by the EPA or through www.grants.gov on or before the solicitation closing date published in Section 4.4 of this announcement. Proposals received after the published closing date will be returned to the sender without further consideration.

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.

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." 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).

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 proposals (Educational Campaign on Policy Barriers to Redevelopment of Vacant Properties; OPEI-07-03)

--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.fedgrants.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 of this announcement) and how project results will be measured. The project description also must describe the proposed approach to tracking outputs and outcomes (described in section 1.2 above). If other project partners or funding sources are involved, their role and contribution must be clearly defined and documented.

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.

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 (no more than 5). 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 never received federal funding, 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. In conducting the programmatic capability evaluation, the Agency will consider the information submitted by the applicant and may consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files.

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 to the project. Letters confirming partner participation must be included in the 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 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

Applicants who submit paper applications must submit one original and four copies of their proposal (as defined above) Applicants who submit electronically through www.grants.gov must follow the directions in Section 4.3 below. Fax and direct email submissions will not be accepted.

4.2(i). 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.

4.2(j). 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 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.

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 www.grants.gov and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* 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 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-07-03, 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 “How To Apply” at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on www.grants.gov (to find the synopsis page, go to 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.

Please be sure to view the additional instructions for applying electronically under this announcement through use of grants.gov that are available for download on Grants.gov.

If you have any technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to 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. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. The organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.
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.

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: 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) (Document 1 in Section 4.3(a)), 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 (Documents 4.3(a) 2- 8), 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:

To attach the cover letter, summary information page, and project description, click on the “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File” and then attach the proposal 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 the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or e-mail at www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp or contact the person listed in Section 7 of this announcement.

If you have technical difficulties while applying electronically, refer to www.grants.gov/CustomerSupport or call 1-800-518-4726.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from grants.gov*) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact the person listed in Section 7 of this announcement. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

4.4. Submission dates and times

Proposals must be received by the EPA or through www.grants.gov on or before August 27, 2007, 5:00 p.m. EDT. 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.

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: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html.

4.6. Funding restrictions

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the "recipient," even if other eligible applicants are named as "partners," "co-applicants," or members of a "coalition" or "consortium." The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards or subgrants under this announcement but may enter into procurement contracts with recipients.

Funding may be used to acquire services or fund partnerships, provided the recipient follows procurement, subaward, or subgrant procedures contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as applicable. Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by these regulations. The regulations also contain limits on compensation for consultants. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their proposals. The fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in a proposal EPA approves does not relieve the applicant of its obligation to comply with competitive procurement requirements.

Subgrants and subawards may be used to fund partnerships with non-profit and governmental entities. 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. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance (see 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 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. Preadward 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.

4.7. Paper copy submission requirements

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:

Mr. Carlton Eley
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1301 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 1408
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 566-2841

If you are mailing your proposal, send it to:

Mr. Carlton Eley
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1301 Constitution Avenue NW, MC-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.

4.8. Pre-proposal/application assistance and communications

In accordance with EPA’s Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications/proposals. However, EPA will respond in writing to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification of the announcement. Answers to frequently asked questions will be posted on the U.S. EPA smart growth website (www.epa.gov/smartgrowth) so that all applicants will have the opportunity to review them.

Section 5: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1. Selection criteria

Applications that meet the threshold criteria in Section 3 will be evaluated against the review elements contained in the table below.

Proposals will be scored high, medium, or low against each of the evaluation criteria using a numerical scale of 0 through 5, with zero being low and 5 being high. Some criteria are considered to be of higher significance than others for the purpose of this RFP; accordingly, those

criteria have higher point values. Those criteria will be scored between 0 and 5, and the score will then be multiplied by 2.

| Criterion | Maximum Points Per Criterion (with weighting) |
|--|---|
| 1. Quality of applicant’s overall approach to conducting a 5-year campaign to educate state-level decision-makers on the costs of abandoned gas stations and other vacant properties and on the opportunities for supporting their redevelopment. | 10 |
| 2. Quality of the applicant’s proposed approach to selecting states to be the focus of the educational campaign. | 5 |
| 3. Quality of the applicant’s proposed approach to analyzing states’ barriers to redeveloping vacant properties. | 5 |
| 4. Quality of the applicant’s proposed approach to selecting participants for the educational sessions during the first year of the agreement. | 5 |
| 5. Quality of the applicant’s proposed educational techniques and approaches that would be used to educate state decision-makers on the benefits of, and strategies for, redeveloping vacant properties. | 5 |
| 6. Degree to which the applicant demonstrates expertise and experience with smart growth issues, particularly the redevelopment of abandoned and other vacant properties. | 10 |
| 7. 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 abandoned and other vacant properties, or is partnering with an organization that meets these requirements. | 5 |
| 8. Degree to which applicant demonstrates expertise in state-level policy- and decision-making processes, particularly those related to the redevelopment of vacant properties. | 5 |
| 9. Degree to which the project budget effectively uses EPA funds. | 10 |
| 10. Degree to which the project effectively leverages and uses matching funds. Under this criterion, 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). | 5 |
| 11. Degree to which the project approach or findings are replicable, serve as learning tools, and will be disseminated to appropriate audiences. | 5 |
| 12. Environmental Results Past Performance. Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on how well they documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under Federal agency assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and 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). | 5 |
| 13. Level of programmatic capability. Proposals will be rated based on the management capabilities of an organization. Applicants must submit information related to this in their supplemental information. In assessing this criterion, EPA will evaluate the applicant’s ability to successfully manage a project. EPA will consider factors such as: (1) past performance | 5 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| <p>completing other projects of similar size, scope and focus (funded with federal or non-federal dollars); (2) organizational capacity and expertise as measured by the qualifications of key personnel and the resources available to the project; (3) demonstrated ability to execute the proposed workplan; (4) history of meeting reporting requirements and submitting acceptable final reports (to federal or non federal funders); (5) the quality of proposed competitive processes for selection of contractors, subgrantees, and subawardees. 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>14. Tracking Progress. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated on their plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes.</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 by a panel of EPA staff and final decisions will be made by EPA management.

5.3. Anticipated announcement and award dates

Award announcements are expected in Autumn 2007.

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 Autumn 2007.

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.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via mail or e-mail by Autumn 2007.

Any disputes regarding funding decisions will be resolved in accordance with the dispute procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005). Copies of these procedures can be obtained from the EPA contact listed under Section 7. They also can be accessed directly on-line at this address: a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm.

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 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.

6.3. 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:

Mr. Carlton Eley
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1301 Constitution Avenue NW, MC-1807T
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 566-2841
eley.carlton@epa.gov

Section 8: OTHER INFORMATION

Both 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 in Section 4.2(i), applicants must clearly mark any portion of their applications/proposals they claim as confidential. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. 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.