

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

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

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: Smart Growth Network Website

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Requests for Proposals (RFP)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-OPEI-DCED-09-01

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

DATES: The closing date for receipt of hard copy proposal packages is January 12, 2009, 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST). All hard copies of proposal packages must be received by Lynn Desautels by 5:00 p.m., EST in order to be considered for funding. Electronic submissions must be submitted through www.grants.gov on or before January 12, 2009, 5:00 p.m. EST. Proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. Award announcements are expected to be made by summer 2009.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Development, Community, and Environment Division in U.S. EPA's Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation is soliciting proposals for a funding opportunity entitled Smart Growth Network Website. Proposals must be received by the EPA or through www.grants.gov on or before January 12, 2009, 5:00 p.m. EST.

Under this solicitation, US EPA intends to fund the development and ongoing maintenance of a website for the Smart Growth Network (SGN). The SGN is a nationally recognized coalition of leadership organizations that have formally endorsed the principles of smart growth. This website will be the SGN's web-based home, providing basic information about, and web links to, each of the coalition's major partner organizations. In addition, it will function as a "one stop shop" for finding the most current, cutting edge information about implementing smart growth approaches, including best practices, resources, and emerging issues. The website should meet the information needs of a wide range of stakeholders, including developers, citizens, planners, government officials, and other interested parties who want to use smart growth approaches to create healthy, economically vibrant communities. An SGN website (<http://www.smartgrowth.org>) is currently supported through a competitively awarded assistance agreement that will expire in 2009. The recipient of that agreement will work with the new awardee to ensure a smooth transition.

US EPA expects to award one (1) cooperative agreement from this announcement. The initial award for this funding cycle is expected to be approximately \$75K, subject to availability of funding within the agency's final FY 09 budget. Funding for future years, in the form of incremental funding, will depend on funding availability, agency priorities, and applicant performance, and is expected to range from \$75K to \$100K annually. The final proposal selected for award consideration may be negotiated for a project period of up to five years, with a ceiling of approximately \$500K for a five-year agreement. Cooperative agreements entail substantial Federal involvement in the project. Substantive involvement may include US EPA review and approval of project scope and annual work plans; participation in and collaboration on various phases of the work; review of all draft and final products; and regular e-mail, phone, and conference calls.

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, and other public or private nonprofit institutions. 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

US EPA's Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED) is seeking proposals for the development and ongoing maintenance of a website serving the Smart Growth Network (SGN). The Smart Growth Network is a nationally recognized coalition of regional and national leadership organizations that have formally endorsed the principles of smart growth. This website will be the SGN's on-line home. It will provide basic information about each SGN partner organization, and will function as a "one stop shop" for current, timely, cutting edge information on implementing smart growth approaches. It will also feature information resources that have stood the test of time and remain classic references in the smart growth field. The site should be designed to serve a wide variety of stakeholders in the community development process, including citizens, planners, government officials, developers, realtors, public health professionals, and others seeking to improve the economy, environment and public health of their communities.

The SGN website should address both the theoretical underpinnings of smart growth as well as the best practices, case studies, and policies that make it successful. The site should feature seminal smart growth "classics" and case studies as well as new, cutting edge information on field tested, innovative best practices for implementing smart growth approaches. The information featured on the website should have both breadth and depth, being useful for persons new to smart growth as well as knowledgeable experts who are seeking to improve the delivery of such approaches in their communities. It should be easily searchable based on audience information needs.

At a minimum, proposals should meet the following baseline requirements:

Baseline website function requirements:

- *Homepage of the Smart Growth Network (SGN)* - provide information about the SGN (what it is; who the Network partners are; what publications and useful tools are available from each partner; and links to partner websites); the SGN membership program (what it is; who can join and how; what benefits the program provides); and access to the SGN membership program's website (maintained through a separate cooperative agreement).

- *Smart Growth Resource "Library"* – provide a comprehensive, searchable, on-line collection of high quality local, regional, and national smart growth resources. The resource library should cover "classics" from the smart growth field, track cutting edge innovations in smart growth practice, and track emerging issues. It should feature the work of SGN partners; think tanks and academic institutions conducting applied research; advocacy groups; local, state, and regional government; and other recognized smart growth leaders. These resources should reflect the best of current practice and should be regularly updated. Resources should include profiles of important upcoming events and conferences of national or regional significance; funding resources and opportunities; and varied sources of information on smart growth policies, issues, case studies and best practices, including but not limited to important news stories; audio files from the Smart Growth Speaker Series (an event hosted by the National Building Museum in Washington, DC on a monthly basis); pod casts and webinars; visualization sequences such as those developed by "Urban Advantage;" PowerPoint presentations from seminal conferences events (e.g., the New Partners for Smart Growth Conference) and

recognized smart growth experts; video files; and web links and/or pdf's for seminal publications, guidebooks and tools.

- *Introduction to Smart Growth* – provide access to high quality, introductory educational materials for the general public on the 10 principles of smart growth and the relationship of smart growth to important issues such as environmental protection, community quality of life, equitable development, public health, and robust local economies.
- *Smart Growth News Service* - manage a subscription- based smart growth news service that issues updates on a bi-weekly basis.
- *Smart Growth Information Assistance* - respond to public requests for general information about smart growth issues and implementation (assume a baseline of 20 inquiries per month).

Baseline website management and design requirements

Content management- the recipient will have primary responsibility for obtaining and managing site content and design. This includes ensuring that content is of high quality and is timely, accurate, accessible, consistent with smart growth principles and responsive to the needs of site users.

User-friendly design and function – the site should be easy for the general public to navigate and search. Because the website should function as a one-stop-shop for information about smart growth, it should balance presentation of diverse content and features while appearing orderly and uncluttered. It should be very easy to search no matter what the user's background or interests are -- so that, for example, a local official, developer, financier, public health specialist, community activist, or member of the general public could easily find smart growth information of relevance to them through the use of a few simple key words.

Website Outreach and Marketing- the recipient will be responsible for developing and implementing strategies to increase the use and public profile of the SGN website. Examples of strategies include registering the domain name with prominent search engines, search engine optimization, publicizing the website at conferences, and developing and distributing marketing materials.

US EPA encourages the submission of applications that build upon these baseline requirements. Examples of possible innovations include but are not limited to interactive discussion forums; guest blogs by recognized smart growth experts; accessibility to multiple languages; expanded information resources; and/or a dynamic database driven website structure that permits real-time updates of content. Applications that provide services, resources and functions in addition to the baseline will be rated higher than applications which do not.

EPA competitively awarded an assistance agreement to support a website for the SGN in 2004 (see <http://www.smartgrowth.org>); funding for that agreement expires in late 2009. The recipient of that agreement will work with the new awardee to ensure a smooth transition to the new website.

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 always 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, but are not limited to:

- Frequent updating and expansion of resource library content;
- Publicizing resources from Smart Growth Network partner organizations addressing how development patterns and the built environment can improve water and air quality and contribute to Brownfield redevelopment;
- Preparation and delivery of a subscription news service;
- Posting of presentations from the annual New Partners for Smart Growth conference;
- Posting of web-accessible PowerPoint presentations and case studies;
- Posting of audio recordings from the Smart Growth Speaker Series;
- Publicizing national and regional conferences that explore how smart growth approaches can produce environmentally responsible development;
- Publicizing availability of resources from conferences, web casts, workshops and other events; and
- Website upgrades to remain current with industry standards.

Expected short-term outcomes of this assistance agreement include increased awareness and understanding of smart growth issues. Longer term outcomes include enhanced ability of a wide variety of stakeholders, including developers, citizens, and government officials, to create communities and regions that are economically competitive and protect the environment and public health. These outcomes might include and are not limited to better capacity and capability for strategic preservation of green space and habitat, more efficient use of energy (including reduced fuel use due to reduced vehicle miles traveled), reductions in air pollution due to increased transportation alternatives and reduced vehicle miles traveled, improved management of storm water run-off, improved watershed protection, productive reuse of abandoned or contaminated sites, improvements in safety and quality-of-life, and measurable progress towards sustainable urban and rural development.

Applicants should clearly define expected outcomes and outputs in their proposals. Award winners will be expected to track results as their work progresses. Wherever possible, outputs and 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. They should clearly demonstrate that they have the ability to screen the vast array of information available on smart growth and select the most appropriate items to feature on the website. 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 walk able 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 clean-up and sustainable redevelopment of Brownfields. Through its focus on smart growth, this solicitation supports EPA's strategic objective to sustain, clean up, and restore communities and the ecological systems that support them (Objective 4.2 in EPA's 2006-2011 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 (year one of the award), U.S. EPA expects to have approximately \$75,000 available for proposals and expects to award one (1) cooperative agreement. The proposal selected for award consideration may be negotiated for a project period of up to five years and may be incrementally funded. Funding for future years will depend on funding availability, agency priorities and applicant performance. In "out years" of the agreement (i.e., years two through five), incremental funding may range from \$75K to \$100K annually. A ceiling of approximately \$500,000 for a five year agreement is anticipated, with the assumption that the annual funding would be in increments of \$75,000. 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

Proposals from existing projects are eligible to compete with proposals for new awards.

2.3. Type of assistance agreements to be awarded

The funding for the selected project will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. 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 work plans 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);
- review and approval of all draft and final products;
- assisting recipient with responses to public requests for information;
- arranging quarterly briefings between the recipient and EPA to discuss website content, design, and development;
- conducting off-site and on-site post award monitoring visits with the recipient; and/or
- Forwarding news summaries, event announcements, and/or updates on the availability of new publications of relevance to website users.

2.4. Anticipated start dates and period of performance

The estimated project period for any cooperative agreement awarded under this solicitation will begin in the summer of 2009. Proposed project period may be up to five (5) years.

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 a 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, and other public or private nonprofit institutions. 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. 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.

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.

Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants).

3.3. Threshold Eligibility Criterion

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals from eligible applicants (see Section 3.1 above) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section 5 of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination. .

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

Only one proposal will be accepted per applicant.

Threshold Criterion 1: Smart Growth Focus

The proposal must directly respond to the issues, subjects, and activities targeted by this RFP and explained under Section 1, "Funding Opportunity Description". 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, the proposal will be reviewed but 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. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section 4.7 of the solicitation by the submission deadline.

Proposals received after the published closing date will be considered late and will be excluded from consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the proposal was late due to EPA mishandling. For hard copy submissions where Section 4.4 requires the proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the closing date, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with the EPA personnel listed in Section 7 as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

Section 4: PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1. How to get proposal package materials

This announcement provides all of the instructions needed for preparing your proposal package. 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 12 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 (Smart Growth Network Website; EPA-OPEI-DCED-09-01)

--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 12 page sides)

The project description must provide a concise overview of the project. It should include a preliminary work plan 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 12 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. If the applicant is proposing pre-award costs, these must be included and explained.

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work

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

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

Staff profiles: The applicant must include short profiles of all principal staff that 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 as well as their areas of expertise related to the project (e.g., website development and management).

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 (i.e., their ability to conduct and manage a project with federal funds) and their experience measuring and reporting on project performance and environmental results (see Section 5.1). This should include a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the past 3 years. For each project, applicants should discuss their performance

history. This includes how the projects were conducted and completed, whether all goals and objectives were met, what the final products and results were, and what their history was of reporting their progress towards achieving expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs). If there were progress issues, applicants should demonstrate how well they documented what the issues were and how they were resolved. If applicable, supplementary information on programmatic capability should also include discussing adverse audit or grants administration findings for the 3 years preceding application under this solicitation. For each project included in the section on programmatic capability, applicants must provide contacts for EPA to obtain additional information. If applicants have 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 evaluating applicants under these factors in Section 5, EPA will consider the information submitted by the applicant and may consider relevant information from other sources including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors. (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

Experience with website development and management: In addition to staff profiles, the applicant should submit examples of other sites that they have designed and maintained that are indicative of the approach they would take to the SGN website. If they are partnering with another organization to deliver these services, then relevant examples of the partners' work should be included.

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 4.6, "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 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 [Adobe](#) viewer and obtain the application package. **To apply through grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader applications and download the compatible Adobe Reader version.** (Adobe Reader applications are available to download for free on www.grants.gov. For more information on Adobe Reader, visit the [Help section](#) on grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp).

Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OPEI-DCED-09-01 or the CFDA number (CFDA 66.611) that applies to the announcement in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the [Application](#) button 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).

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 email Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

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 a 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, email Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov 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

The deadline for receipt of hard copy proposal packages is January 12, 2009, 5:00 p.m., EST. All hard copy proposal packages must be received by the EPA contact listed in Section 7 by 5:00 p.m., EST, in order to be considered for funding. Electronic submissions must be submitted through www.grants.gov by January 12, 2009, 5:00 p.m. EST. 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.

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

Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards to acquire contract services or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 [CFR](#) Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of [OMB Circular A-133](#), and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, if appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application that the contractor(s) was selected in

compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA will not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

Other restrictions

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:

Lynn Desautels
Development, Community and Environment Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1301 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 1408
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 566-2840

If you are mailing your proposal, send it to:

Lynn Desautels
Development, Community and Environment Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Mail Code 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: PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1. Selection criteria

Only eligible entities whose proposals meet the threshold eligibility criteria in Section 3 of this announcement will be evaluated against the review elements contained in the table below.

Proposals will be evaluated based on how well they address the criteria below. Each proposal will be rated using a numerical scale of zero through five. All factors will be weighted equally, with the exception of factor 6, which will receive double weighting.

Criterion	Maximum Points
1. Degree of expertise in website development and management	5
2. Degree to which the design and approach proposed will create an effective, searchable website that will function as a learning tool that meets the needs of a broad range of development stakeholders – both novices and smart growth experts.	5
3. Quality and appropriateness of the method whereby the applicant will identify and collect site content and ensure that it is accurate, accessible, consistent with smart growth, of high quality, and responsive to the needs of site users.	5
4. Quality of the applicants approach to search engine optimization	5
5. Degree to which the proposal exceeds baseline website requirements stipulated in section 1.1, <i>Funding Opportunity Description</i> .	5
6. Time required for applicant to launch a website that meets baseline conditions.	10
7. Degree to which the project budget effectively uses EPA funds. Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate (i) whether the proposed project budget is appropriate to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes, and (ii) whether the budget provides an appropriate approximation of the percentage of the budget designated for each major activity	5
8. Degree to which the project budget effectively leverages and uses matching or cost-sharing 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	5

<p>funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Leveraged funding or other resources need not be for eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement unless the Applicant proposes to provide a voluntary cost share or match. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost share/match/participation, applicants must meet their matching/sharing/participation commitment as a condition of receiving EPA funding. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for voluntary match/cost share/participation 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 voluntary matches/cost shares/participation. Other Federal grants may not be used as voluntary matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants).</p>	
<p>9. Demonstrated level of programmatic capability</p> <p>The applicant will be evaluated based on (i) technical ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, taking into account their past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance agreements (which include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years, (ii) history of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project within the last 3 years, and (iii) past performance in documenting and/or reporting on progress towards achieving expected outcomes and outputs (i.e., results) under federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last 3 years; and, if such progress was not made, whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not. Applicants who have not received federal assistance must provide other information demonstrating their ability to manage federal funds. This might include managing programs funded through state grants or a private foundation. In evaluating applicants under this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant but 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). Applicants with no history of receiving and managing grant funding from federal, state, or foundation sources whose proposals demonstrate a well designed approach to the project, including adequate staffing levels, will be given a score of 3.</p>	5
<p>10. Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs</p> <p>Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the effectiveness of the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section 1 of this announcement.</p>	5

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. Each proposal will be given a numerical score and will be ranked accordingly. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the Approving Official based on this ranking

5.3. Anticipated announcement and award dates

Award announcements are expected in summer 2009.

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 final awards will be announced in summer 2009.

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 work plan). 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 summer 2009.

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 formal written approval from EPA. Pre-award 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:

Lynn Desautels
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
(202) 566-2840
desautels.lynn@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.