

**AGENCY:** ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

**TITLE:** COMMUNITY ACTION FOR A RENEWED ENVIRONMENT (CARE) PROGRAM

**ACTION:** Request for Initial Proposals (RFIP) - Initial Announcement

**RFIP NO.:** OAR-IO-05-08

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO:** 66.035

**DATES:** The closing date and time for receipt of initial proposals is May 20, 2005, 4:00 p.m. EST. All applications submitted must be either be postmarked or received in the Program Office by the closing date and time. No late proposals will be accepted

Final applications will be requested only from those eligible entities whose initial proposals have been tentatively selected for award. EPA will notify selected applicants not later than June 17, 2005.

Questions regarding this solicitation must be submitted in writing to the following url site: [www.epa.gov/CARE](http://www.epa.gov/CARE). All questions must be received no later than 14 calendar days prior to the closing of this announcement. Answers to questions received will be posted at the same location as this announcement.

EPA reserves the right to amend this solicitation as deemed necessary. Amendments could be administrative in nature (e.g. change of dates or location), technical (change in requirement) or, changes which affect the anticipated funding. If this need occurs, EPA will post the amended solicitation at the same location as this announcement.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits proposals for financial assistance to eligible entities through the new CARE program. CARE is a new and unique community-based, community driven, multimedia demonstration program designed to help communities understand and reduce risks due to toxics from all sources. The CARE program will empower communities to form collaborative partnerships, develop a comprehensive understanding of all sources of risk from toxics, set priorities, and identify and implement projects to reduce risks through collaborative action at the local level. CARE's long term goal is to help communities build self-sustaining, community-based partnerships that will continue to improve local environments into the future.

Two types of agreements will be awarded under this solicitation as part of the CARE program. The objective of these grant programs is to investigate whether this new cross-Agency, multi-media program provides greater environmental benefits than either non collaborative or single media approaches. Level I cooperative agreements will support the following types of activities: forming community-based collaborative partnerships; developing a comprehensive understanding of toxic risks; and, setting community risk reduction priorities. Level II agreements will fund activities to identify and demonstrate actual risk reduction projects on-the-ground in their community.

**FUNDING/AWARDS:** The total estimated funding expected for all awards under this solicitation is \$1.65 million for FY 2005. EPA anticipates awarding six Level I cooperative agreements ranging in expected value from 60,000 to \$90,000 with most Level I agreements being funded at the level of about \$75,000. EPA also anticipates awarding four Level II cooperative agreements ranging in expected value from \$150,000 to \$325,000. Most Level II awards will be funded at about \$275,000. The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation is two years. Applicants are not required to have been a recipient of a Level I agreement in order to receive a Level II agreement.

The CARE program is very competitive. Limited funding is available and EPA expects to receive many applications. EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including to zero) the total number of awards or, change the ratio of Level I to Level II cooperative agreements it awards. Such change may be necessary as a response to the quality of applications EPA receives, the size of the awards to the selected applicants, or for other reasons.

## **CONTENTS BY SECTION**

- I. Funding Opportunity Description
- II. Award Information
- III. Eligibility Information
- IV. Application and Submission Information
- V. Application Review Information
- VI. Award Administration Information
- VII. Agency Contacts
- VIII. Other Information

### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

#### **A. Background.**

The CARE program was developed in response to community requests for help in addressing toxic concerns and in recognition of the need for new approaches to help communities address toxic concerns. While national regulatory approaches have resulted in significant reductions in toxic releases, they have not always been effective in addressing specific community concerns and cumulative risks resulting from toxic releases from multiple and often diffuse sources. CARE is designed to complement national regulatory approaches and meet community needs by building the capacity of communities to understand and take effective actions to address toxic concerns resulting at the local level. Through CARE, organizations will build community capacity to understand and reduce risks by providing funding, information, training, technical support, help building collaborative partnerships, and by improving access to voluntary programs to address community concerns.

**B. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage.** EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs.

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. The CARE Programs directly supports progress towards EPA Strategic Plan Goal 4 Healthy Communities and Ecosystems, Objective 4.2 (Communities Sustain, Clean Up, and Restore Communities and the Ecological Systems That Support Them), and sub-objectives 4.2.1 (Sustain Community Health) and 4.2.2 (Restore Community Health); and Objective 4.3 (Ecosystems), Sub-objective 4.3.1 (Protect and Restore Ecosystems). In the CARE program, communities will select and implement EPA voluntary program(s) to reduce toxic exposures and protect the environment in their communities. While the voluntary programs and other actions taken will differ from community to community, overall, the actions taken by communities through the CARE program will support a number of the other goals, objectives and sub-objectives in the EPA Strategic Plan, including, but not limited to:

Goal 1 Clean Air and Global Climate Change:

Objective 1.1 (Healthier Outdoor Air)

Sub-Objective 1.1.2 (Reduced Risk from Toxic Air Pollutants)

Objective 1.2 (Healthier Indoor Air).

Goal 2 Clean and Safe Water

Objective 2.1 (Protect Human Health)

Sub-objective 2.1.1 (Water Safe To Drink)

Objective 2.2: Protect Water Quality

Sub-objective 2.2.1: Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis.

Goal 3 Land Preservation and Restoration

Objective 3.1 (Preserve Land)

Sub-objective 3.1.1 (Reduce Waste Generation and Increase Recycling)

Goal 5 Compliance and Environmental Stewardship

Objective 5.2: Improve Environmental Performance Through Pollution Prevention And Innovation,

Sub-objective 5.2.1 (Prevent Pollution and Promote Environmental Stewardship by Government and the Public)

Sub-objective 5.2.2 (Prevent Pollution and Promote Environmental Stewardship by Business)

Sub-objective 5.2.3 (Business and Community Innovation)

2. Outcomes. Through these agreements EPA hopes to work with communities so they can: reduce risks from exposure to toxic pollutants through collaborative action at the local level.

develop a comprehensive understanding of all sources of risk from toxics and set priorities for effective action.

create self-sustaining community-based partnerships that will continue to improve local environments.

3. Outputs. The anticipated output for the CARE projects will vary from community to community. The main output for a community with a CARE Level I Agreement will be the creation of a broad based community stakeholder group that has developed an understanding of the toxic risks in their community and determined the priority risk. The main outputs for a community with a CARE Level II Agreement will come from the implementation of the selected voluntary programs. The specific outputs will vary but the communities will be expected to achieve the specific outputs of the programs they select.

Through CARE, communities will demonstrate whether this new multi-media program succeeds in bringing communities together to investigate their toxics problems and educate the citizens about those risks, take effective action to improve the environment and build self-sustaining organizations that will continue to improve the environment after the CARE cooperative agreements have expired.

This investigation will be conducted for both Level I and Level II agreements. Therefore, in order to receive a cooperative agreement under the CARE program, the applicant must develop performance measures to be achieved through the activities proposed and funded. The performance measures should focus on solid, qualitative actions related to the applicant's activities, outputs and outcomes. These performance measures will help EPA gather insights concerning successful process and outcome strategies and provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future CARE projects. Wherever possible for Level I agreements, and in all Level II agreements, measurable environmental outcomes must be included.

### **C. Scope of Work.**

The goals of the CARE program are:

To empower communities to:

- 1) Reduce risks from exposures to toxic pollutants through collaborative action at the local level,
- 2) Develop a comprehensive understanding of all sources of risk from toxics and set priorities for effective action, and,
- 3) Create self-sustaining community-based partnerships that will continue to improve local environments

To achieve those goals the CARE program will use the following Strategies:

- 1) Empower communities to address toxics issues at the local level,
- 2) Build effective collaborative partnerships that include community residents, organizations, and businesses, governments, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and other appropriate stakeholders,
- 3) Examine and understand toxic risks from multiple sources in the community and set priorities for effective action to reduce risks,
- 4) Focus on action, use information and analysis to build consensus and help target greatest risks,
- 5) Focus on using voluntary programs and approaches to find solutions and reduce risks; and
- 6) Mobilize local resources and build long term community capacity to understand and address environmental risks

It should be noted that the CARE program uses the term toxics in the expansive common sense use of the term (the way citizens in communities view environmental toxics) - that is substances in the environment that cause negative health or environmental impacts. We are not limiting the term toxics to chemicals listed in one or more statutes or regulations.

CARE is designed to deliver voluntary programs to communities. Voluntary programs include a wide series of programs and actions that are based on people taking action not required by statute or regulation. There are two major categories of voluntary programs. In the first one, participants specifically sign up for a program, and must meet certain criteria to be considered members. The motivation for participation is usually based on a combination of a desire for improved environmental performance, economic savings or improved performance and/or recognition. Examples include EPA's Waste-wise, Best Workplaces for Commuters, and Performance Track programs. The second category of voluntary programs are generally based on providing information to participants who then implement these programs to reduce health risks to themselves or others. Examples include EPA's radon, integrated pest management, and Make a Difference Campaign programs.

Organizations sharing the CARE goals and willing to implement the CARE strategies to achieve those goals are invited to apply for funding from the CARE program. In addition to funding, EPA and other governments and organizations will build community capacity to reach CARE goals by providing information, training, technical support, help with building collaborative partnerships, and access to voluntary programs to address community concerns.

CARE funding will be provided to applicants through two different types of Cooperative Agreements, Level I and Level II. In the smaller Level I cooperative agreements, funding is provided to assist grantee efforts to create or develop a collaborative partnership dedicated to understanding and reducing toxic risks and impacts in their community. Partnerships should be as inclusive as possible including community residents, representatives of community organizations, small and large businesses, state, tribal, local government agencies, EPA and other federal agencies, colleges and universities, and other organizations and individuals as appropriate. These partnerships, with technical support from EPA, states, and other partners, will work to identify all sources of toxic risk in the community and set community priorities for risk reduction. While Level I grants are designed to identify risk and set priorities, community partnerships are encouraged to begin risk reduction actions to address obvious priorities as a part of the Level I activity. The goal of the Level I cooperative agreements is to ensure, at completion, that the community has developed an understanding of the toxic risks facing the community, set priorities for risk reduction activities, and developed an effective collaborative problem solving partnership that is prepared to identify actions to address the priority risks and mobilize the community and its partners to reduce those risks.

The larger Level II cooperative agreements are designed for communities that have established a broad-based collaborative problem solving partnership focused on understanding and reducing toxic risks, have developed an understanding of the toxic risks facing their community, and set community priorities for risk reduction. Level II grants will be used to identify and implement risk reduction actions to address community priorities. Risks will be addressed through the selection and implementation of voluntary programs. In addition to risk reduction, EPA will work with Community Stakeholder Groups to help leverage other resources and become self-sustaining, so they can continue to reduce toxic risks and build healthier communities after the completion of the Level II cooperative agreement. Through CARE, EPA and other partners will work with the stakeholder group to provide training and to find new ways to attract new resources and partners to support further risk reduction activities (although it must be noted that

funds from these grants can not be used to pay for filling out grant applications or other fund raising activities).

In order to apply for a Level II cooperative agreements the applicant must be leading or representing an existing collaborative partnership that represents the various constituencies (e.g. citizens, businesses, government) in the community. This group must have developed a comprehensive understanding of all sources of risk from toxics, set community priorities for risk reduction, and be prepared to quickly select, and implement projects that will reduce risk in the community. The prior award of a Level I Cooperative Agreement is not necessary to apply for a Level II Cooperative Agreement.

These grants will be awarded under EPA's research and demonstration authorities: **Clean Water Act**, Section 104(b) (3); **Safe Drinking Water Act**, Section 1442(c)(3)(A); **Solid Waste Disposal Act**, Section 8001(a); **Clean Air Act**, Section 103(b) (3); **Toxic Substances Control Act**, Section 10(a); **Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act**, Section 20(a); and **Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act**, Section 203.

Applicants must be aware that there are certain statutory restrictions related to EPA's annual Appropriation Acts. Therefore, EPA funds for awards under this solicitation cannot be used for projects within the scope of activities covered by other appropriation accounts within the EPA Appropriation Act. For example, CARE grants cannot be used to retrofit school buses, for Brownfields activities funded by the Agency's STAG account (training, research, and technical assistance to individuals and organizations to facilitate the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation), or for response actions and other associated activities (including Technical Assistance Grants) under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended (CERCLA).

The CARE Cooperative Agreements are designed to investigate and, hopefully, demonstrate the long term value of the CARE program. Specifically, EPA has developed the CARE program as a new approach to address the problem of cumulative risk in communities. While CARE builds on the efforts of previous community based programs, CARE does offer a new approach. The CARE approach is different in that it combines all of the following factors (each of which may not be unique to CARE but the combination of approaches and tools is unique):

- CARE is a multimedia program that takes a comprehensive view of toxics in a community not limited to a single media (air, water, land) or source.
- CARE is based on empowering communities to set their own priorities for risk reduction and select the voluntary program that best fits their needs.
- CARE will create a network that includes all the recipients of CARE grants. This network will allow communities to learn from and support each other.
- CARE combines in a single program grants that allow communities to get organized and examine toxic risks with grants that provide funding to take action to the priority toxics risks.
- CARE uses collaborative stakeholder processes to bring the various sectors of the community together to jointly use voluntary actions to solve problems.

- CARE mobilizes a network of EPA staff from across programs and regions to provide support, training and tools to support communities and the EPA staff working with them.
- CARE establishes an effective mechanism to deliver voluntary programs to the communities that need and want them.

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of CARE, EPA will compare the results of the communities that receive CARE grants with the environmental and other outcomes from other communities which do not receive CARE grants. The communities selected will be those who are involved in two different kinds of existing programs that combined form a baseline of existing EPA community programs. The first set are communities that have received grants to create stakeholder groups to analyze toxic issues or develop monitoring programs for communities but are not provided EPA funds to implement programs to reduce toxics. The second set of communities are those who receive EPA grants to implement single media programs but do not look at the broad range of toxics in a community. EPA will select the new communities for each year of the CARE demonstration grants and follow the results those communities achieve over time. Their results will be compared with CARE communities.

To investigate the effectiveness of the CARE program, the results of communities that get CARE grants will be compared to communities that do not receive CARE grants. A number of factors will be used which will include:

- Environmental results: toxics reductions in the environment; improved environmental conditions; reduced exposures to toxics or other direct environmental impacts
- Environmental education: the extent to which the community has been provided information about environmental issues and possible solutions
- Ability of the community to form an collaborative stakeholder group focused on environmental issues, the ability of that group to function successfully and reach consensus and the ability of the stakeholder group to become self-sustaining
- Resources leveraged by the community - the extent that individuals or organizations other than the initial program (CARE or baseline program) have invested in the improved environmental health of the community.

In addition, a periodic evaluation of more subjective measures of success will be performed. These measures include items such as:

- Did organizations improve delivery of environmental services as appropriate to better meet the needs of CARE communities?
- Does the community believe that they have achieved real risk reduction through CARE?
- Did the communities achieve improved human health, economic activity, community pride, perceptions about community quality of life, enhanced social capital, etc. through their priority actions?

The following are examples of the kinds of activities that are appropriate for both Level I and Level II grants:

1. activities to convene, facilitate and provide information to the community stakeholder group.
2. activities to investigate toxic problems in the community and prepare materials to educate the stakeholder group and the community on the results of those investigations.
3. analysis of the toxics problems in the community, their relative risks and potential solutions
4. activities to reduce risks including identifying and choosing options for risk reduction and mobilizing local resources to implement new or existing voluntary programs, such as IAQ Tools for Schools, Adopt Your Watershed, Design for the Environment, and the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program.
5. providing information to the stakeholder group, community or the general public about any of the above activities and their results.
6. activities to evaluate and track progress, measure results, and communicate lessons learned with other communities.

The relative mix of these activities will change between the two types of grants. Level I grantees may or may not implement programs to reduce risk. Level II grantees will be focused on program implementation and may or may not spend time and money on further refining their analysis of risks in the community. Additional information on the CARE program may be accessed at: [www.epa.gov/CARE](http://www.epa.gov/CARE)

## **II. Award Information**

### **A. What is the amount of funding available?**

The total estimated amount of funding available under this solicitation for FY 2005 is \$1.65 million. Cooperative agreements resulting from this announcement will be funded incrementally over a two year period.

### **B. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?**

The EPA anticipates awards of six (6) Level I cooperative agreements ranging in value from \$60,000 to \$90,000 and four (4) Level II cooperative agreements ranging in value from \$150,000 to \$325,000. EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including to zero) the total number of awards or, change the ratio of Level I to Level II cooperative agreements it awards. Such change may be necessary as a response to the quality of applications EPA receives, the size of the awards to the selected applicants, or for other reasons.

Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. EPA sees its role as providing training, tools, technical assistance and other support. EPA will not be making decisions for the community. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for this



project may include:

- close monitoring of the recipient's performance
- collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
- approving substantive terms of proposed contracts;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the recipient);
- review and comment on content of publications (printed or electronic) prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient);

### **C. What is the project period for award(s) resulting from this solicitation?**

CARE cooperative agreements last for two years. The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation is September, 2005 through October, 2007.

### **D. Can funding be used to acquire services or fund partnerships?**

Funding may be used to acquire services or fund partnerships, provided the recipient follows procurement and 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 limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their proposal. Moreover, the fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the proposal EPA approves does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements.

Subgrants or subawards may be used to fund partnerships with non profit organizations and non-federal 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 or products to carry out its cooperative agreement. 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 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.

## **III. Eligibility Information**

### **A. Eligible Entities**

Proposals will be accepted from local and tribal governmental agencies, universities, or non-profit organizations, as defined by [OMB Circular A-122](#). EPA is not including State agencies because EPA is working through the Environmental Commissioners of the States (ECOS) to develop a partnership with states to implement the CARE program. This partnership will be used to facilitate coordination and improve assistance to communities. Non-profit organization, as defined by OMB Circular A-122, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or

other organization which: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations. For this purpose, the term "non-profit organization" excludes (i) colleges and universities; (ii) hospitals; (iii) state, local, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; and (iv) those non-profit organizations which are excluded from coverage of the Circular in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Circular.

## **B. Threshold Eligibility Factors**

- EPA will consider only one application per organization for any given project. However, an organization can be a partner in more than one CARE project.
- LEVEL II Cooperative Agreements -- applications/proposals for Level II agreements that do not meet the following criteria will not be considered further:

**There must be an existing and functioning broad based stakeholder group that has completed work to identify community toxic priorities:** In order to be eligible for a Level II cooperative agreement, the applicant must be leading or representing an existing collaborative partnership that represents the various constituencies in the community: citizens, businesses, government (additional appropriate partners can also be part of the partnership). The partnership must have completed a detailed examination of toxics in the community which includes more than one environmental media, come to consensus on the specific community priorities for risk reduction, and be prepared to choose a risk reduction to address community priorities and mobilize the community and its partners to implement this plan. To substantiate the group and its accomplishments please submit information with regard to the Stakeholder Group including membership, meeting notes and any reports or work products produced.

## **C. Cost-Sharing or Matching.**

A specific level of cost sharing or matching is not required as a condition of eligibility, or otherwise, for proposals selected for award. However, for Level II agreements, the ability to leverage additional resources, technical or financial, from other applicants or partners will be evaluated (See Section V). Applicants plans to leverage funds can not include the use of grants funds on fund raising activities (see: OMB Circular A-122 cost item #19 for non-profits, OMB Circular A-87 cost item #21 for local and tribal governments, OMB Circular A-21 cost item #22 for universities.)

## **IV. Application and Submission Information**

### **A. How to Obtain Application Package.**

Applicants may download individual grant application forms, or electronically request a paper application package and an accompanying computer CD of information related to applicants/grant recipients roles and responsibilities, from EPA's Grants and Debarment website by visiting: [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how\\_to\\_apply.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm).

### **B. Content and Form of Application Submission.**

1. **Proposals.** Applicants must submit one original signature initial proposal and two complete copies. Proposals must not exceed 10 pages in length and should conform to the following outline (while the proposal cannot exceed 10 pages in length, the specific page recommendations identified below for each section of the proposal are suggestions only):

- a. Overview of the organization, its mission, and related experience (up to 1 page);
- b. Narrative Work Plan. The narrative work plan must summarize the project and explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in *Section I(B), Scope of Work*, and also specifically address each of the evaluation criteria disclosed in *Section V(A), Evaluation Criteria* with the response to each criteria clearly marked (up to 6 or 7 pages);
- c. Brief biographical sketches of key technical experts who will be involved in the project (up to 1 page);
- d. Detailed budget narrative (up to 2 pages);

Applicants are strongly advised to avoid submission of extraneous materials. All material that exceeds the maximum page limitation for the proposal described above will not be considered. The maximum page length does not include any pieces documenting third party commitments (e.g. references or letters confirming commitments) or substantiating material (membership lists, meeting notes, reports, etc.) submitted as requested under Section III. B(Threshold Eligibility Factors). All application materials must be completed in English. Proposals not in English will not be considered. The minimum acceptable font size for application materials shall be 10 point; material in smaller font sizes will not be considered.

To aid applicants, we are providing additional information relating to the type of information that should be included in the narrative workplan to address each of the evaluation criteria in Section V(A):

### **Evaluation Criteria for Level I Agreements**

#### **1. Extent of environmental risks and impacts:**

##### The Narrative Should:

Describe the environmental problems that cause the applicant to seek a Level I CARE

cooperative agreement. Using available information, describe the nature of pollution in your community and identify any health and/or environmental impacts that may be related to toxics.

Level I cooperative agreements are designed to help communities assess and prioritize risks, so communities will not be expected to present a detailed analysis of community risks and impacts at this stage. Available information and community knowledge can be used to present a preliminary picture of community risk and impacts.

## **2. Community Involvement/Collaboration/Partnerships:**

### The Narrative Should:

describe the specific tasks that will be undertaken to bring the community together for the purpose of collaboratively identifying and reducing exposure to toxics in the community. The narrative should explicitly describe what groups the applicant will work with and why that group is sufficiently inclusive of all major interests in the community to be credible and successful. List all groups that have agreed to work with you on this project and their reason for inclusion. Indicate if you have ever worked with any of these groups in the past, and if so, when and what were the results. The processes through which the organizations will work together and communicate, and the roles the different organizations will play, should be spelled out. For any organization listed you must include a contact name with a phone number or EPA will not consider that organization to be part of the partnership. Please include letters of commitment from your partners wherever possible. (The discussion of the organizations you will work with will count against your page total - the letter of commitment will not). EPA reserves the right to contact organizations to verify their involvement. Explain your plans for facilitating stakeholder meetings and your plans and/or process for bringing the diverse group of stakeholders together to achieve consensus.

## **3. Alignment with CARE Strategies:**

### The Narrative Should:

discuss the connection between the 5 specific CARE strategies listed in the criterion, the problems the CARE project grant is intended to address, the approach the applicant plans to use, and how the proposed work aligns with the five strategies. We recommend, but do not require, a separate short write-up for each strategy.

## **4. Project Goals and Implementation Plan:**

### The Narrative Should:

specifically identify project goals and outputs, and describe how the project work planned will directly address the community's needs. The workplan should enumerate measurable goals, tasks, and milestones (i.e., dates by which tasks will be carried out and outputs will be produced). Identify what persons or organizations will have lead responsibility for tasks and milestones.

## **5. Tracking and Measuring Environmental Results:**

### The Narrative Should:

describe the applicant's plan for tracking environmental results including outputs (what is done) and outcomes (the results of the action). Also identify indicators or measures the applicant will

use to determine at the conclusion of the project if goals were achieved and if the project is a success.

## **6. Organizational Capacity:**

### The Narrative Should:

describe other projects that have been successfully managed, or organizational features and controls that will help ensure the project can be effectively managed and successfully completed.

The applicant must describe and provide substantiation of its ability to manage a project such as the one proposed. Please also describe the system(s) that will be used to appropriately manage, expend, and account for Federal funds. If the applicant is, or has been, a recipient of an EPA grant/cooperative agreement in the last 5 years the applicant must provide information regarding compliance reporting measures, and annual financial status reporting.

## **Evaluation Criteria for Level II Agreements**

### **1. Extent of environmental risks and impacts:**

#### The Narrative Should:

include information from the stakeholder group's investigation of the risks in the community. Specifically identify the extent of the environmental/toxic problems in the community. Describe the need for the proposed project, how severe are the problems, and what are the associated potential health impacts.

### **2. Success of Broad-Based Stakeholder Group:**

#### The Narrative Should:

Describe community priorities for risk reduction and describe the process through which community priorities were identified. Please include specific information on how all sectors of the community, especially community residents, were involved in the process. Describe information collected and methods for collecting information. Describe how information on toxics risk was analyzed to identify priorities. Describe how consensus in the Partnership and community was built on community priorities. How effective has the stakeholder group been in examining the toxics problem in the community? How broad-based is the stakeholder group, does it represent all relevant constituencies in the community? Please also describe how will community members and stakeholder groups have participated and will participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Level II work proposed for Cooperative Agreement funding.

### **3. Ability to Leverage New Resources and Sustain Community Efforts to Understand and Improve the Environment:**

#### The Narrative Should:

describe funds or other resources that have been committed, will be committed and/or have been sought to support the goals for this project (in addition to the EPA CARE proposal). Please indicate if you are currently or plan to solicit funding from any other EPA source(s) for work related to this proposal. Please include letters of commitment from your partners wherever

possible. Communities that can provide a plan for leveraging local and national funding resources to address community priorities and can describe how Level II CARE funds will be used as a part of this broader plan will be especially welcome. Also please describe how the applicant will develop a partnership and community infrastructure so that stakeholder group (or its successor) can continue the community-based environmental and health protection work in the future.

#### **4. Alignment with CARE Strategies:**

##### The Narrative Should:

discuss the connection between the 3 strategies listed in the criterion, the problems the CARE project is intended to address, the approach the applicant plans to use, and how the proposed work aligns with the three strategies. We recommend, but do not require, a separate short write-up for each strategy.

#### **5. Project Goals and Implementation Plan:**

##### The Narrative Should:

specifically identify project goals and outputs, and describe how the project work planned will directly address the community's needs. The workplan should enumerate measurable goals, tasks, and milestones. Identify what persons or organizations will have lead responsibility for tasks and milestones.

#### **6. Tracking and Measuring Environmental Results:**

##### The Narrative Should:

describe the applicant's plan for tracking environmental results including outputs (what is done) and outcomes (the results of the action). Also identify indicators or measures the applicant will use to determine at the conclusion of the project if goals were achieved and if the project is a success.

#### **7. Organizational Capacity:**

##### The Narrative Should:

describe other projects that have been successfully managed, or organizational features and controls that will help ensure the project can be effectively managed and successfully completed. The applicant must describe and provide substantiation of its ability to manage a project such as the one proposed. Please also describe the system(s) that will be used to appropriately manage, expend, and account for Federal funds. If the applicant is, or has been, a recipient of an EPA grant/cooperative agreement in the last 5 years the applicant must provide information regarding compliance reporting measures, and annual financial status reporting.

**2. Final Applications.** FINAL APPLICATIONS WILL BE REQUESTED ONLY FROM THOSE ELIGIBLE ENTITIES WHOSE INITIAL PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN TENTATIVELY SELECTED FOR AWARD.

**C. Submission Dates and Times.**

1. The closing date and time for submission of initial proposal packages is May 20, 2005, 4p.m. EST. All proposal packages must be either post marked by the closing date or received in the office listed below by the closing date and time in order to be considered for funding. Proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. Electronic or facsimile transmission of initial proposals/final applications will not be accepted.
2. The closing date and time for submission of completed final application packages will be determined at a later date and will be accepted only from those eligible entities whose initial proposals have been tentatively selected for award. Instructions for final application packages will be provided at a later point in time.
3. Because of the unique situation involving U.S. mail screening in Washington, D.C., EPA highly recommends that applicants use express mail to submit their proposals. Initial proposals/applications must be addressed to:

Express Delivery Address (FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc.)

US EPA  
Attn: CARE Program  
Mail Code 8001A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460  
Phone: 202-564-7400

Regular Mail Delivery Address (U.S. Postal Service)

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Attn: CARE Program  
Mail Code 8001A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

**V. Application Review Information**

**A. Evaluation Criteria.**

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Applicants must clearly state whether they are applying for a Level I or Level II agreement. Each proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

**For the award of Level I cooperative agreements, the applicants will be evaluated on the following criteria:**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL I CRITERIA</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Maximum Points per criterion</b></p>
<p><b>1. Extent of environmental risks and impacts:</b> The extent to which the community is impacted by toxic pollution in various environmental media (air, water, land, indoor environments, etc.), including significant community exposures to toxics from multiple sources and/or multiple stresses to the local environment, and/or the extent to which there are multiple stresses on economically disadvantaged communities and/or vulnerable communities and populations. CARE grants are designed to help communities understand and address risks due to multiple sources of toxics from all media so more points will be given to communities able to describe multiple concerns. Information that is specific to your community (e.g. we have these sources of toxic emissions: a, b, c) will be given more weight than information that is very general (e.g. all urban area have air pollution)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10</b></p>
<p><b>2. Community Involvement/Collaboration/Partnerships:</b> Collaborative partnerships are the key for action in a CARE project. The applicant will be evaluated based on the extent to which they have organized or will be able to organize an effective collaborative partnership of all the various stakeholders in and supporting the community (e.g., citizens, businesses, governments, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations) and any other appropriate partners. The partnership must include all parties necessary to identify sources of toxics, set priorities, and mobilize the community and its partners to take actions to reduce risks. Applications with letters of commitment will be scored higher than applications which do not have them. Additional credit will be given to applications with letters of commitment from multiple stakeholders representing different types of interests, i.e. community, business, government, etc.. (EPA reserves the right to contact organizations to verify their involvement.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>20</b></p>
<p><b>3. Alignment with CARE Strategies:</b> In the Scope of Work section (I.C) of this solicitation, the CARE program has identified six strategies to achieve its goals. The applicant will be evaluated based on how the work proposed for the Level I cooperative agreement aligns with the following five CARE strategies. (Response to Criterion 2 above will suffice for the discussion of the alignment with the second CARE strategy so only the remaining five strategies will be scored here; each will be worth 5 points.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Empower communities to address toxics issues at the local level</li> <li>– Examine and understand toxic risks from multiple sources in the community and set priorities for effective action</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>25</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Focus on action; use information and analysis to build consensus and help target greatest risks</li> <li>– Focus on using voluntary programs and approaches to find solutions and reduce risks</li> <li>– Mobilize local resources and build long term community capacity to understand and address environmental risks</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Project Goals and Implementation Plan:</b> The extent to which the project has a well-thought-out implementation plan to achieve the goals of the CARE project. A plan is critical to the success of a project, and documents what specific work will be done and how cooperative agreement funds will be spent.</p>	<b>15</b>
<p><b>5. Tracking and Measuring Environmental Results:</b> Effectiveness of applicant's plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving expected outputs and outcomes identified in Section 1 of the announcement.</p>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>6. Organizational Capacity:</b> The applicant will be evaluated based on its demonstrated ability to effectively manage the proposed project (including the ability to successfully manage federal funds) to ensure that it is performed successfully.</p>	<b>20</b>

## LEVEL II EVALUATION CRITERIA

**For the award of Level II cooperative agreements, applicants will be evaluated based on the following criteria:**

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points per criterion
<p><b>1. Extent of environmental risks and impacts:</b> The extent to which the community is impacted by toxic pollution in various environmental media (air, water, land, indoor environments, etc.), including significant community exposures to toxics from multiple sources and/or multiple stresses to the local environment, and/or the extent to which there are multiple stresses on economically disadvantaged communities and/or vulnerable communities and populations. CARE grants are designed to help communities understand and address risks due to multiple sources of toxics from all media so more points will be given to communities able to describe multiple concerns. Information that is specific to your community (e.g. we have these sources of toxic emissions: a, b, c) will be given more weight than information that is very general (e.g. all urban area have air pollution)</p>	<b>10</b>

<p><b>2. Success of Broad-Based Stakeholder Group:</b> In order to be eligible for a Level II cooperative agreement, the applicant must be leading or representing an existing collaborative partnership that represents the various constituencies in the community: citizens, businesses, government (additional appropriate partners can also be part of the partnership). The partnership must have completed a detailed examination of toxics in the community which includes more than one environmental media, come to consensus on the specific community priorities for risk reduction, and be prepared to choose a risk reduction to address community priorities and mobilize the community and its partners to implement this plan. Under this criteria, applicants will be evaluated based on the inclusiveness, effectiveness and overall success of the collaborative partnership. Inclusiveness looks at how broad based the partnership is and whether the participants represent the various interests in the community. Effectiveness looks at breath and reasonableness of the examination of toxics in the community. Success looks at the ability of the partnership to reach consensus on priority risks and the readiness of the group choose risk reduction priorities and implement them.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>
<p><b>3. Ability to Leverage New Resources and Sustain Community Efforts to Understand and Improve the Environment:</b> The extent to which the Community Partnership can demonstrate its ability to use the work and results of the CARE program to leverage other resources, including technical assistance, and volunteers, to expand and sustain its efforts to understand and improve the local environment. CARE cooperative agreements can help to address community concerns and improve the local environment but they will not be sufficient to address the long term needs of the community. The ability to use CARE funding and the CARE program to leverage resources and build a sustainable community effort to understand and improve its environment will be key to creating healthy communities and environments. [Again please note that EPA funds can not be used for fund raising including paying for the production of grant applications.]</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>
<p><b>4. Alignment with CARE Strategies:</b> In the Scope of Work section (I.C)of this solicitation,, the CARE program has identified six strategies to achieve its goals. The applicant will be evaluated based on how the work proposed for the Level II cooperative agreement aligns with the following three CARE strategies. (Responses to Criteria 2 and 3 above will suffice for the discussion of the alignment with the second, third, and sixth CARE strategies so only the remaining three strategies will be evaluated here; each is worth 5 points))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Empower communities to address toxics issues at the local level</li> <li>– Focus on action: use information and analysis to build consensus and</li> </ul>	<p><b>15</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– help target greatest risks</li> <li>– Focus on using voluntary programs and approaches to find solutions and reduce risks</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5. Project Goals and Implementation Plan:</b> The extent to which the project has a well-thought-out implementation plan to achieve the goals of the CARE project. A plan is critical to the success of a project, and documents what specific work will be done and how cooperative agreement funds will be spent.</p>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>6 Tracking and Measuring Environmental Results:</b> Effectiveness of applicant's plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving expected outputs and outcomes identified in Section 1 of the announcement.</p>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>7 Organizational Capacity:</b> The applicant will be evaluated based on its demonstrated ability to effectively manage the proposed project (including the ability to successfully manage federal funds) to ensure that it is performed successfully.</p>	<b>20</b>

**B. Other Selection Factors:**

In addition to exploring the effectiveness of the CARE program, EPA is also trying to investigate whether CARE is more or less successful in specific situations or with specific types of grantees. Accordingly, in addition to the evaluation of proposals against the ranking criteria described above in V(A) above, the following factors will be considered by the Selection Committee (described below) in making award selection decisions for all cooperative agreements:

- geographic balance among the EPA Regions,
- a good balance of Level I and Level II grants,
- the diverse nature of the projects (major environmental concerns),
- type of community (rural, urban, etc.),
- type of grantee (community group, local government agency, university),
- the projected use of the funds,
- projects whose environment and/or public health benefits can be sustained after the cooperative agreement is completed, and,
- projects that are consistent with the priorities established in the Regional Strategic Plans

Regional strategic plans can be found at:  
[www.epa.gov/ocfo/regionplans/regionplans2.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/regionplans/regionplans2.htm).

## **C. Review and Selection Process.**

The proposals will initially be divided by EPA Region. All Level I and II applications will first be evaluated by an Evaluation Team in each EPA Regional Office to see if they meet the Threshold Criteria identified in Section III. Those that do not will not be scored or considered further. The Evaluation Team in each EPA regional office will then evaluate the proposals from their region based on the ranking criteria described in Section V(A). The two highest ranked Level I and Level II applications from each of the ten regional offices will then be forwarded to the Selection Committee (described below) (i.e. four applications will be forwarded from each region.)

As described above, the highest ranked applications from each region based on the evaluation of the applications against the Section V(A) criteria will be referred to the Selection Committee for further review. The Selection Committee will consider and review the applications against the “other factors” identified in Section V(B). The Selection Committee will consist of staff from a cross section of EPA Programs and Regions and may include staff from State environmental departments. Final award selection recommendations will be made by the Selection Committee from among the highest ranked proposals based on the Selection Committee’s review of the highest ranked applications against the “other factors” specified in Section V(B).

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **A. Award Notices.**

Following final selections, all applicants will be notified regarding their application’s status.

1. EPA anticipates notification to *successful* applicant(s) will be made via telephone, electronic or postal mail by June 17, 2005. This notification, which advises that the applicant’s proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin performance. The award notice signed by the EPA grants officer is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. At a minimum, this process can take up to 90 days from the date of selection.
2. EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail by June 24, 2005. In either event, the notification will be sent to the original signer of the application.

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.**

1. A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at:  
[http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable\\_epa\\_regulations\\_and\\_description.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm).
2. Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants *selected* for funding may be required to provide a copy of their proposal to their [State Point of Contact](#)

(SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Proposal and not all states require such a review.

3. All applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.
4. Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by sending a written request to:

Larry Weinstock  
USEPA  
Attn: CARE Program  
Mail Code 8001A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

### **C. Reporting Requirement.**

After award and during administration of the resulting cooperative agreements, the EPA Project Officer(s) expects to hold monthly telephone conference calls with all successful applicants. A template will be furnished on those items to be discussed.

Quarterly progress reports will be required. The quarterly progress report should include: a summary of performance progress-to-date, detailed expenditures-to-date, problems encountered, successes achieved, and lessons learned. EPA will track these information as it collects information on the success of the CARE program. The schedule for submission of quarterly progress reports and any specific required information required in the reports will be established, by EPA, after award.

As part of EPA's efforts to evaluate the long term effectiveness of the CARE program, EPA or its contractors or future grantees may attempt to follow-up with community stakeholders groups involved in the CARE program from time to time ask a series of questions from the applicant regarding the accomplishments of the community after the end of the cooperative agreement. Such questions would be of a general nature such as to additional funding received and programs implemented. EPA hopes that the applicant will be willing to provide such information when requested.

## **D. Training Requirement**

Organizations submitting initial proposals that are selected will be provided training by the Environmental Protection Agency for managing the CARE grant and meeting the goals of the CARE program. Organizations whose proposals are selected for CARE grants are required to attend and participate in the training provided to the CARE grantees. We expect to hold annual training sessions of 3 to 5 days. This travel would be an allowable cost and should be included in an applicant's budget.

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail, facsimile, or by using our website listed above. Answers will be posted, bi-weekly, until the closing date of this announcement at the OAR Grants/Funding webpage ([http://www.epa.gov/air/grants\\_funding.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html)).

Send mail to:

US EPA  
Attn: CARE Program  
Mail Code 8001A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Send fax to:

202-564-7739 (attention CARE program)

Go to our website, and click on the words contact us at the bottom of the screen:

[www.epa.gov/CARE](http://www.epa.gov/CARE)

## **VIII. Other Information**

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no award as a result of this announcement. The EPA Grant Award Officer is the only official that can bind the Agency to the expenditure of funds for selected projects resulting from this announcement.