

Questions and Answers on USEPA 2005-2006 State Innovation Grants Solicitation

The following is a list of questions that have been asked during the open solicitation period. The answer follows each question. For the readers convenience, the general topic for each question has been put in **bold print**. As questions continue to come in, this list will be updated during the solicitation period to provide equal access to potentially interested applicants. New questions will be located at the end of the list.

Q1. The initial proposal **close date** falls on a Sunday, will someone be in the office to receive pre-proposals on that day or can we have one more business day to submit ?

A1. An amendment was issued changing the proposal due date to Monday, April 25.

Q2. What is the pre-proposal **due date** ?

A2. Monday, April 25, 2005.

Q3. What does the change in **CFDA** number mean ?

A3. The Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) is the Federal governments index of assistance programs (see www.cfda.gov). The CFDA provides a description of each program along with instructions on how to apply and contact the sponsoring Agency for additional information. EPA's new CFDA number (66.940) for this solicitation more accurately reflects the "restricted" eligibility to States only.

Q4. I am considering submitting a proposal for our State, but don't want to waste my or your time. Can I **discuss** it with you to see if it would be a **good fit** for this program, or if it might be selected for this competition ?

A4. Based on the EPA Grants Competition Policy (in general), it would be inappropriate for EPA staff to provide advice or information that would give someone a competitive advantage. During the period of open solicitation, EPA can't guide or advise potential applicant's regarding their submittal of a proposal or selection. Potential applicants should review the language of the solicitation to see if their concept would be eligible and evaluated favorably under the evaluation criteria.

Q5. I am a State employee, and have worked with the State on EPA projects in the past. Can

I find out more about the **solicitation** ?

A5. You can see the 2005 solicitation on the website at <http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/solicitation2005.pdf>

Q6. Our State is pondering whether and how to use the **team proposal** approach. Could you recommend possible States for us to partner with, or could you provide any **insight** as to how we might go about convincing another State to take on a project with us to enhance our chances for an award?

A6. General ground rules in the EPA Grants Competition Policy prohibits us from weighing in on any particular strategy for competing. Specifically, EPA staff can not:

- Provide advice or information that gives someone a competitive advantage;
 - Disclose information or ideas that are in a competing application/proposal;
 - Offer to write applications/proposals for potential applicants or review and comment on draft applications/proposals;
 - Assist applicants in responding to the evaluation/selection factors in the solicitation;
 - Provide information on the Agency’s approach to evaluating applications/proposals or selecting applicants for award that is not otherwise stated in the solicitation announcement.
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Q7. Is it possible for a **consortium of States** to apply for a grant ?

A7. Yes, a consortium of States may apply. EPA will accept a joint proposal (multi-state, multi-agency, state-tribe) in addition to an individual state proposal. This would be considered as a team approach, or joint proposal. The States can jointly apply, or partner with interstate organizations or regional organizations; however, interstate organizations or regional organizations could not be the sole applicant or recipient for a State Innovation Grant. A team proposal must come from the principal environmental regulatory agency of one State in the team, and should list the other agencies and points of contact within those partner-agencies and, as appropriate, Native American Tribes. Each principal State environmental regulatory agency in a team proposal may submit an individual State proposal in addition to participating on a team proposal.

EPA is particularly interested in innovation that promotes integrated (cross-media) environmental management with a high potential for transfer to other States. A State Innovation Grant proposal from two or more States can propose in one proposal package to undertake strategic innovation projects that promote larger-scale models for “next generation” environmental protection. Proposals that include a team approach to produce “systems-oriented” change, with the practical, feasible intent of providing better results

from a program, process, or sector-wide innovation, will be considered favorably.

Q8. If our State applies for the State Innovation Grant, could we **subcontract** work to **contractors** or to **not-for-profit** organizations?

A8. Yes, if the State or proposal team wanted to subcontract or subgrant funding to a not-for-profit or other entity to accomplish the work it would be acceptable from a grants management perspective. The pre-proposal narrative and budget should be transparent about what is being proposed. The State(s) should retain a substantive involvement in the project.

Q9. Are State **schools** (or schools, in general) eligible to apply for the grant ?

A9. Only the principal environmental regulatory agency from each State is eligible to apply for a State Innovation Grant. Other State Agencies may want to approach the State environmental regulatory agency with partnership proposal ideas, but the environmental regulatory agency will make the decision about the projects it wishes to propose. Projects that reflect partnership with other agencies within the State or particularly with other States and Tribes are encouraged. States may submit a single proposal from the Agency alone and may submit up to one additional partnering proposal.

Q10. I am currently in **school** (university/college), and would like to know if the research that I'm doing would enable me to apply for the grant ?

A10. No (See response to Q9 and Q8 above).

Q11. Can you recommend any **other grants** for me to apply for ?

A11. Various programs within EPA have funding opportunities available for distinct purposes, throughout the fiscal or calendar year. There are so many grants opportunities available that it would be difficult to name them all. Depending on the subject area, there may be one or several grant opportunities for potential applicants to apply within EPA, as well as with other federal agencies. It is best for interested applicants to inquire about funding opportunities directly from the different offices (Headquarters, including media or program offices, and Regional office where your State is located) and to maintain a watchful eye towards grant opportunity publications. If you are not a regular reviewer of the federal register, a good place to routinely look for a synopsis of grant opportunities for all federal agencies would be fedgrants.gov

Q12. Can I get a **list of the projects** that the State Innovation Grant Program **funded** in the

past? I'm wondering if they are mostly projects that benefit **big business**.

A12. Brief descriptions of all of the funded projects from the two previous competitions appear on the website (<http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants>). We have taken the needs of small business into consideration, and believe that we have made provision for their needs in this grant program. As in previous rounds of this competition, the theme for the 2005-2006 solicitation is “innovation in permitting”. Under this theme, EPA remains interested in proposals that apply the Environmental Results Program (ERP) model, an alternative to permitting scheme for small business sectors (see solicitation for details). Out of the fifteen projects that received awards in the 2002-03 and 2003-04 competitions, seven included Environmental Results Program models. For specific examples of previously submitted and selected projects, see Information on Past EPA State Innovation Grants Competitions at <http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants>.

Q13. Does EPA really require project **progress reports** ?

A13. Yes. A new EPA Policy mandates quarterly reporting from funded project institutions. It is also important to the National Center for Environmental Innovation to fully document progress, successes and impediments in all of these State Innovation Grant Projects as these projects must fully inform other State agencies that want to attempt similar projects in the future. If progress reports are not submitted on time, it may affect current grant status, or could impact future grant opportunities with EPA.

Q14. Are there any templates and/or guidance that you can provide pertaining to how **quarterly reports** should be written (i.e., what info to include, etc.)?

A14. The SIG Quarterly Reports should include:

- Review of progress toward specified timelines and milestones;
 - if projects have/haven't met expected timelines and milestones
 - what (if any) impediments and how the State plans to address them
- Short narrative describing progress over the quarter;
- Financial report documenting whether or not the project is on target (e.g., rate of expenditure versus the expected rate of spending), and if not, what the State is going to do to address the problem;
- Assessment toward reaching final project goals;
 - If applicable, identify any major impediments to the overall progress of the project, and how the State proposes to resolve them
 - Specify if assistance is needed from EPA, etc.
- Overall description of what's working right and what's not;
- Data tables and supporting documentation, as necessary.

Q15. Could you please provide me with a link to or a copy of **EPA Order 5700.7 "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements"**?

A15. You can find the Environmental Results policy at <http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/epaorder5700.7.pdf>

Q16. I just found out about your solicitation. I'm not with a State agency, but I have worked with state and other agencies in the past. Can you tell me what you're looking for in a proposal? Does it have to be in a **scientific format** ?

A16. A pre-proposal can only be submitted by a State environmental regulatory agency. Individuals may not apply. The theme for the solicitation is Innovation in Permitting. Interested organizations may find it useful to look at pre-proposals submitted in earlier cycles of the competition to see how State Agencies have addressed format issues (<http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/solicitation2005.pdf>). Specifically, see Section 4.2 (Content and Form of Application Submission). You may also find Attachment 1 (Application Checklist) and Section 5.2 (Description of Review, Selection, and Award Process) to be helpful.

Q17. What is the **delivery time cut-off** for submitting pre-proposals on April 25 ?

A17: Per section 4.3 of the RFIP, pre-proposals delivered electronically (email or fax) must arrive here at EPA headquarters by 4:30 PM EDT and at the EPA Regional office by 5:00 PM local time. Pre-proposals submitted by mail must arrive at EPA HQ by 6PM EDT and at the Regional EPA Office by 4:00 PM local time. Pre-proposals submitted by courier must arrive at EPA HQ by 6:00 PM EDT and at the Regional EPA Office by 4:00 PM local time. The addresses for transmittal appear in the solicitation.

Q18. What **documentation** is required for a **team approach** ?

A18. See Section 4.2 of the solicitation. A team proposal must come from the principal environmental regulatory agency of one State in the team, and should list the other agencies and points of contact within those partner-agencies and, as appropriate, Native American Tribes. Assuming that all team members agree with the pre-proposal, and willingly agree to take on the responsibility to participate as team members, it would be appropriate in the cover memo to identify the submittal as a team or joint pre-proposal submittal. In addition, the Summary page should identify the lead State agency, and all team members. If a State has not pre-emptively submitted team support documentation for each team participant along with their pre-proposal, it may be necessary for them to demonstrate team members support (e.g., serious intent, specifying their role and responsibility on team, accountability, and any constraints -- if known) in a commitment

letter prior to selection.

Q19: In **linking** the project to the **Strategic Plan**, for purposes of the pre-proposal do you require a list of goals and objectives, or is additional language required ?

A19: A list of the goals and objectives is acceptable for the pre-proposal. In the next phase, for those States that are selected to submit a final proposal, a more in-depth discussion of the objectives and sub-objectives would be required for inclusion in the project work plan. Appendix A or the Environmental Results Order provides guidance on outputs and outcomes and linking work plans to the Strategic Plan at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>.
