

**Federal Agency Name:** Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Science and Technology

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Cooperative Agreement for Water Quality Standards (WQS) Forum

**Announcement Type:** Request for Applications

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number:** 66.436

**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-OW-OST-07-02

**Dates:** Hard copy applications must be received by EPA (See Section VII of this RFA) by 4:00 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), August 20, 2007, or by electronic submission through Grants.gov by 11:59 P.M. EDT, August 20, 2007. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before July 25, 2007. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/funding/>.

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

### **A. Background**

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible entities to support a new forum in which states, territories, and authorized tribes can routinely communicate and collaborate with each other and with EPA to enhance the effectiveness of their water quality standards (WQS) programs, as authorized under the Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). An authorized tribe is a tribe that EPA has found eligible to administer water quality standards programs in the same manner as a state (40 CFR 131.8)

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement for approximately \$400,000 with a four-year project period. The total funding available for the initial year of the project is expected to be approximately \$100,000. The Agency expects to provide funding for three additional years (i.e., approximately \$400,000 over 4 years) depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations.

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible entities to develop and support a new forum to enhance communication among WQS stakeholders and improve non-federal WQS programs. The proposed forum is in support of the Agency's Strategic Plan, Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.2: Protect Water Quality, Sub-Objective 2.2.1: Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>).

States, local governments, territories, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia); public and private universities and colleges; hospitals; laboratories; public or private nonprofit institutions; interstate agencies, intertribal consortia; and individuals. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. An intertribal consortium must meet the definition of eligibility in the Environmental Program Grants for Tribes Final Rule, at 40 CFR 35.504 (66 FR 3782, January 16, 2001) (FRL-6929-5) and be a non-profit organization within the meaning of OMB Circular A-122.

This announcement is soliciting applications to develop and provide a communication forum through which states, territories, and tribes can discuss a wide variety of WQS issues to better manage their water quality programs. Specifically, through this forum, states, territories, and tribes will identify barriers to

adoption of WQS and potential solutions, promote best management practices for water uses, and support innovative implementation of WQS programs. In addition, funds awarded under this announcement are expected to promote information and technology transfer through the development and use of electronic communication tools, such as a dedicated website and listserve(s), and face-to-face meetings. EPA may co-sponsor some or all of the face-to-face meetings with successful applicants. Funds awarded under this announcement may be used by the recipient to promote participation and support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend the workshops.

### ***B. Statutory Authority***

The statutory authority for this announcement is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these assistance agreements to the following: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution.

### ***C. Project Description***

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to provide a forum for representatives of states, territories, and authorized tribes to communicate and collaborate with each other, and with EPA, about how to enhance the effectiveness of their respective WQS programs. The successful applicant will provide leadership in designing and running an effective communication forum for managers and water quality experts in state, territory, and tribal governments. This includes providing leadership in identifying challenges in WQS programs and formulating potential solutions. In addition, eligible applicants may also review the *Strategy for Water Quality Standards and Criteria: Setting Priorities to Strengthen the Foundation for Protecting and Restoring the Nation's Waters* (see <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/strategy/index.html>).

### **Project Elements:**

In order to contribute to program objectives, applicants should address the following project elements in their applications: (1) establishment and management of a communication forum and (2) training and information dissemination. It is anticipated that the elements that are critical to basic program success will be established within the first year of the project. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional project elements that may not be included in the announcement but that may contribute to overall program success in their applications.

### **Establishment and Management of Communication Forum**

The project elements listed below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage a communication forum. The list does not attempt to be comprehensive, and elements may be modified during project implementation. However, listed elements do support the application review and ranking criteria in section V.A., and may provide guidance as applicants decide what activities will be needed to successfully support the formation and growth of the forum. EPA may co-sponsor some or all of the face-to-face meetings with successful applicants. Funds awarded under this announcement may be used by the recipient to promote participation and support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend the annual face-to-face meetings.

1. Establish, coordinate, and provide leadership for a **forum** that will facilitate information sharing and technical solution transfer on WQS issues. For application planning and budgetary purposes, applicants may assume that membership of this forum should consist of at least ten states,

territories, or authorized tribes, preferably one from each EPA region and that the forum would be convened for at least one face-to-face meeting on an annual basis during the four-year project period. For a map showing the EPA regions, see <http://www.epa.gov/regional/index.htm>.

2. Identify and convene a subgroup of four to five forum members to serve on a **steering committee** that will design and support the long-term structure of the forum. It is anticipated that the steering committee will also establish basic operating procedures addressing issues such as membership and participation requirements, meeting agenda-setting, communication protocols, and travel reimbursement protocols to support the travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend meetings. For application planning and budgetary purposes, pre-scheduled conference calls with the steering committee could also be part of the regular communication activities for the forum.
3. Identify and convene a **state/EPA workgroup** that will include no more than five EPA experts in addition to the members of the forum. Non-federal personnel must comprise the majority of the workgroup. This state/EPA workgroup will facilitate information sharing and technical solution transfer between the states and EPA. The successful applicant must propose an effective and efficient plan for conducting the workgroup's activities including a schedule for conference calls and face to face meetings, and a plan for addressing high priority WQS issues such as designated water use, protection of high quality waters, and adoption and implementation of WQS.
4. Provide leadership to the forum in bringing WQS issues forward, prioritizing issues, and formulating strategies for solutions. Identify topics of interest among the forum members and assist interested members to prepare agendas and facilitate conference calls and meetings on those topics. Organize an annual meeting for the forum members, potentially including relevant experts as the meeting topics warrant their involvement. The successful applicant must propose an effective and efficient plan to promote networking opportunities for forum members during regular meetings and conference calls.
5. Establish multiple means for communication with and among the forum members, including for example, a dedicated website, list serve(s), e-mail contact lists, etc. The successful applicant must develop and maintain a dedicated website that will serve as a platform to disseminate all forum activities to a broader audience. The successful applicant, rather than EPA, will make final decisions on the content of the web site.
6. Develop a four-year project period milestone schedule of deliverables and prepare quarterly reports describing the progress of deliverables.

### **Training and Information Dissemination**

The list below suggests the types of non-federal training and information dissemination activities that may be supported under this announcement. This is not intended to be a complete list. It is expected that forum members will identify and prioritize areas of interest for training, including newly emerging issues that may not be included in this preliminary listing.

1. Assist WQS professionals to develop and maintain the knowledge and skills needed to adopt and implement effective WQS by providing opportunities for education and specialized training.
2. Assist WQS professionals to enhance their knowledge of fundamental WQS topics, such as establishing appropriate designated uses, water quality criteria, anti-degradation policies, and general implementation policies. It is anticipated that this may be accomplished through, for

example, disseminating relevant technical and policy papers, court decisions, and drafts/proposals of new federal or state policies/regulations that may have broad water quality consequences.

3. Identify other specific WQS topics on which non-federal WQS professionals feel they need additional training. This may be done via specialized trainings developed in partnership with EPA's Water Quality Standards Academy or Watershed Academy, trainings taught by outside experts, or other methods.

#### ***D. EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results***

The forum and the anticipated activities to be funded under this announcement support the Agency's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan, Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.2: Protect Water Quality, Sub-Objective 2.2.1: Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>).

This announcement is consistent with EPA's Strategic Plan, Goal 2, Objective 2.2, Protect Water Quality, Sub-Objective 2.2.1: Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis. Scientifically sound water quality standards are vital to protecting water for swimming, public uses, and fish and wildlife, and they provide the environmental baseline for water quality programs. The recipient will establish a communication forum to facilitate information exchange and the identification of new approaches for maintaining and improving water quality and protecting public health. The EPA Strategic Plan, the 2008 National Water Program Guidance, and the 2005 - 2008 Plan for EPA/Tribal Partnership are all linked to this page and may be of interest to entities considering submitting applications under this solicitation. In addition, the *Strategy for Water Quality Standards and Criteria: Setting Priorities to Strengthen the Foundation for Protecting and Restoring the Nation's Waters* (see <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/strategy/index.html>) may be of interest.

Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and to the extent practicable, well-defined outcomes. Environmental outputs (deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work products related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

*Outputs:* Anticipated outputs (deliverables) from the cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement include:

- Establish and manage a communication forum, including the operational protocols, participation requirements, and members.
- Prepare quarterly performance reports.
- Develop and maintain an electronic means of communication, such as the dedicated website and/or listserve(s) to effectively communicate forum activities, including meeting and teleconference schedules, agendas, and other useful information.
- Convene annual face-to-face meetings of the forum, facilitating information sharing and technical solution transfer on WQS issues among states, territories, and tribes. Identify challenges in WQS programs and formulate potential solutions.

- Convene annual face-to-face meetings of the State/EPA workgroup.
- Develop and implement a strategy for identifying training and information dissemination activities to increase the knowledge and skills of WQS professionals.

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. In this context, certain efforts designed to improve decision-making and behavioral changes can be viewed as environmental outcomes (results) if the grantee can show or measure the improvement in the knowledge of decision-makers who are in the position to create environmental institutional changes that are necessary to restore or protect the environment.

Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

*Outcomes:* Anticipated outcomes from the cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement include:

- Enhanced water quality standards information exchange and capacity of state, territory, and tribal governments.
- Increased knowledge and skills of WQS professionals.
- Improved water quality standards that reflect the current and evolving body of scientific information and that have well-defined means for implementation through CWA programs.

## **II. Award Information**

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement under this announcement. The total funding available for the initial year of the project is expected to be approximately \$100,000. The Agency expects to provide funding for three additional years (i.e., approximately \$400,000 over four years) based on the availability of funds and other applicable considerations. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award.

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 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. Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of 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. 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. 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.

Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the successful applicant in the performance of work supported by grant funds. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, anticipated substantial federal involvement for this project may include:

1. **Close monitoring of the applicant's performance** to verify achievement of proposed results, including identification of representatives interested in participating in the formation and longer term activities of the communication forum, including adoption and implementation of rules and procedures of operation.
2. **Collaborating with both the award recipient** (who will facilitate the functioning of the communication forum and State/EPA work group) and participating state and tribal members during performance of the scope of work. Collaboration may include participation on phone calls and at meetings as invited, and at recipient's request, identifying water protection experts who might appropriately provide presentations to the face-to-face meetings. The participating work group members and the facilitator will determine, with input from the EPA Project Officer, the location of face-to-face forum meetings that are outside of the Washington, DC area.
3. **Reviewing qualifications of key personnel** named in application. (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient.)
4. **Reviewing and commenting on reports** prepared under the cooperative agreement. (The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.)

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### ***A. Eligible Applicants***

States, local governments, territories, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia); public and private universities and colleges; hospitals; laboratories; public or private nonprofit institutions; interstate agencies; intertribal consortia; and individuals are eligible entities.

Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. An intertribal consortium must meet the definition of eligibility in the Environmental Program Grants for Tribes Final Rule, at 40 CFR 35.504 (66 FR 3782, January 16, 2001) (FRL-6929-5) and be a non-profit organization within the meaning of OMB Circular A-122. The term "interstate agency" is defined in CWA Section 502 as "an agency of two or more States established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more States, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." Nonprofit applicants may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the

definition of a nonprofit organization in OMB Circular A-122. Interstate agencies may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority, which establishes their status. Intertribal consortia may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the requirements of 40 CFR Part 35.504.

### ***B. Cost Sharing or Matching***

There are no cost sharing or matching requirements.

### ***C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria***

These are requirements which, if not met by the time of application submission, will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V 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.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement at the time of application submission.
2. The content of application packages must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or the application will be rejected. In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application and/or parts of the application, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
3. Applications must be received by EPA or through Grants.gov on or before the solicitation closing date and time published in Section IV.C of this announcement. Applications received after the published closing date and time will be returned to the sender without further consideration.
4. Hard copy applications packages must be submitted by hand delivery, overnight delivery, or courier service (see Section IV.B.2. for instructions on submission of hard copy paper applications). Application packages submitted via e-mail will **not** be considered for award. All electronic submissions must use the Grants.gov process described in Section IV.B.1.

**Applications submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.**

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

### ***A. Address to Request Application Package***

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF-424 and SF-424A, are available at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how\\_to\\_apply.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm) and by mail upon request by calling the Grants Administration Division at (202) 564-5320.

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

Applicants have the option to submit their applications in one of two ways: 1) electronically through the <http://www.grants.gov> website or 2) hard copy by express delivery service, hand delivery, or courier service to the EPA contact identified in Section VII. All applications must be prepared and include the information as described below, regardless of mode of submission.

#### **1. Electronic Submission through Grants.gov**

Applicants who wish to submit their materials electronically through the federal government's Grants.gov website may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download an application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required

application package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency.

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and authorized to sign applications for federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://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, you should designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process under this announcement, go to <http://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 Application Instructions” to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package for this announcement. To download the PureEdge viewer click on the “PureEdge” viewer link. Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OW-OST-07-02**, or the appropriate CFDA number that applies to this announcement (CFDA 66.436), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the button “How To Apply” at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page go to <http://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 find EPA opportunities).

**Application Submission Deadline:** Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **11:59 P.M. EDT, August 20, 2007.**

Please submit *all* of the application materials described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/funding/> or go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Find Grant Opportunities” on the left side of the page and then click on Search Opportunities/Browse by Agency and select Environmental Protection Agency. Application materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped.

***How to submit your application through Grants.gov:***

Applicants **are required to submit the following documents a through k** to apply electronically through Grants.gov. Documents **a through h** should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Application Package page. Documents **i through k** are listed in the “Optional Documents” box, but *please note that these so-called “optional” documents must also be submitted as part of the application package if they are applicable to your organization.*

a. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424). Complete the form. There are no attachments. The organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included in 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.

b. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A). Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the four-year project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (a percentage), the base (e.g.,

personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package. (See instructions for document j, below.)

c. SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs. Complete the form. There are no attachments.

d. Grants.gov Lobbying Form - Certification Regarding Lobbying. Complete the form. There are no attachments.

e. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54. Complete the form. There are no attachments. If additional pages are needed, attach these additional pages to the electronic application package by using the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box.

f. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-award Compliance Review Report. Complete the form. There are no attachments.

g. Statement of Work. **See Section IV.B.3** (Statement of Work) for additional details on specific information that must be included. When developing the Statement of Work, applicants should refer to Section I.C of the announcement which describes the project elements.

h. Budget Narrative Attachment - Detailed Itemized Budget. Prepare the detailed itemized budget and attach it by clicking on “Budget Narrative Attachment Form” and then “Add Mandatory Budget Narrative”. Provide a detailed itemized budget for the following categories, specifying unit costs:

- Personnel;
- Fringe Benefits;
- Contractual Costs;
- Travel;
- Equipment;
- Supplies;
- Other;
- Total Direct Costs;
- Total Indirect Costs (must include documentation of accepted indirect rate); and
- Total Cost.

If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-federal attendees.

i. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities - SF-LLL. Complete the form if your organization is involved in lobbying activities.

j. Other Attachments Form - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. Complete this form if indirect costs are included in the proposed project budget. Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach a copy of your organization’s Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable. You must submit a copy of your organization’s Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed project budget includes indirect costs.

k. Other Attachments Form - Biographical Sketches for the Project Manager(s). Use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box to attach a copy of the biographical sketch

of each project manager for the proposed project. Provide the names, phone numbers, business address, and e-mail address, for proposed principal investigator(s) and key associates. Describe the qualifications, experience, and availability of these personnel to perform the work. Outline the education, work history, and knowledge/expertise of the individual as they relate to managing the proposed project. A biographical sketch must be submitted for each major project manager, educator, support staff member or other major project participant. Full resumes may be included as an appendix to the main application package.

For each document **a through f**, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed and then click on the box that says “Move Form to Submission List”. This action moves the document over to the box that says “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For **document g** (Statement of Work portion of the application package), you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your project Statement of Work using the format outlined in Section IV.B.3 of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word or Adobe .pdf file. When you are ready to attach the Statement of Work to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File” and then attach your Statement of Work (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename,” The filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments that you would like to submit with your Statement of Work, you may click “Add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form”. When you 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”. Follow the same general procedures for attaching **document h** (Detailed Itemized Budget) using the “Budget Narrative Attachment”.

Documents **i, j, and k** are listed in the “Optional Documents” box, but *please note that these so-called “optional” documents must also be submitted as part of the application package if they are applicable to your organization.* You are only required to submit document i (SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) if your organization is involved in lobbying activities. You are required to submit document j (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement) if you have included any indirect costs in your proposed budget. You *must* submit document k (Biographical Sketches for Project Manager(s)) to meet the requirements of this announcement. To attach document j and document k, use the “Other Attachments Form” in the “Optional Documents” box. After attaching the documents, remember to highlight the “Other Attachments Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List” in order to move the documents to the box that says “Optional Completed Documents for Submission”.

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments, and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary.

Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY07–WQS Forum – 1<sup>st</sup> Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2<sup>nd</sup> submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – FY07–WQS Forum – 2<sup>nd</sup> Submission”. Once your application package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

From the “Grant Application Package” page, your 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 resubmit 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 email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>, or contact Agnes Ortiz by phone at 1-202-566-1303 or email at [ortiz.agnes@epa.gov](mailto:ortiz.agnes@epa.gov). If you have any other technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from Grants.gov*) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Agnes Ortiz as indicated in the paragraph above. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

## **2. Hard Copy Submission and CD Submission**

Three hard copies of the complete application package and an electronic version on a CD are required to be sent by express mail, courier service, or hand delivered. Electronic submissions may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc). **Applications submitted by U.S. Postal Mail or facsimile submission will not be considered.**

### **Address for Hard Copy Submissions:**

U.S. EPA, Office of Water, Office of Science and Technology  
Attn: Agnes Ortiz  
EPA West Building, Room 5231B  
1301 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Complete application packages must contain the following items listed below:

a. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424). Complete the form. There are no attachments. The organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included in 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.

b. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A). The total amount of federal funding requested for the four year project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package. (See instructions for document j, below).

- c. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B). Complete the form. There are no attachments.
- d. Lobbying Form - Certification Regarding Lobbying. Complete the form. There are no attachments.
- e. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54. Complete the form. Attach additional forms as needed.
- f. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-award Compliance review report. Complete the form. There are no attachments.
- g. Statement of Work. **See Section IV.B.3** (Statement of Work) for details on specific information that must be included. When developing the Statement of Work, applicants should refer to Section I.C of the announcement which describes the project elements.
- h. Budget Narrative Attachment Form - Detailed Itemized Budget. Provide a detailed itemized budget for the following categories, specifying unit costs:
- Personnel;
  - Fringe Benefits;
  - Contractual Costs;
  - Travel;
  - Equipment;
  - Supplies;
  - Other;
  - Total Direct Costs;
  - Total Indirect Costs (must include documentation of accepted indirect rate); and
  - Total Cost.

If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-federal attendees.

- i. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). Complete this form if your organization is involved in lobbying activities.
- j. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if indirect costs are included in your project budget). Complete this form if indirect costs are included in the proposed project budget. You must submit a copy of your organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed project budget includes indirect costs.
- k. Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel: Programmatic Capability and Past Performance. Submit a biographical sketch of each project manager for the proposed project. Provide the names, phone numbers, business address, and e-mail address, for proposed principal investigator(s) and key associates. Describe the qualifications, experience, and availability of these personnel to perform the work. Annotated resumes (not to exceed one page each) outlining education, work history, and knowledge/expertise of the individual as it relates to managing the proposed project, must be submitted for each major project manager, educator, support staff member or other major participant. Full resumes

may be included as an appendix to the main application package.

**3. Statement of Work.** The page limit for the Statement of Work is twelve (12) typewritten double-spaced pages. The Statement of Work narrative must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this. Pages should be numbered for ease of reading. Hard copy submissions may be submitted double-sided. If a single-spaced application is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 12 page double-spaced page limit for applications; excess pages will not be reviewed (the 12 page double-spaced application page limit would be the equivalent of 6 single-spaced pages; any single-spaced pages in excess of 6 will not be reviewed). Supporting materials such as the cover page, table of contents, and biographical sketches are not included in the page limit.

- a) *Cover Page.* Include the project title and applicant information (organization name, address, and contact person, phone number, fax, and e-mail address). Provide total project cost and amount requested.
- b) *Table of Contents.* One page immediately following the cover page.
- c) *Executive Summary.* The executive summary should be a stand alone document and should not exceed two pages. The executive summary should provide highlights of project organization and administration and include a brief description of proposed program implementation methodologies, with an overview of major project goals and methods of measuring and assessing progress. The executive summary should include the amount of funding requested from EPA and the project period.
- e) *Objectives.* A numbered list (1, 2, etc.) of concisely written project objectives. In most cases, each objective should be stated in a single sentence.
- f) *Work Plan.* The work plan must address the following four elements:
  1. Technical Approach. In developing the technical approach, the applicant should consider the content of Section I.C, which provides additional information of direct relevance to the selection criteria identified in Section V.A.

- a. The technical approach should include a description of how the communication forum will be established, including a description of the:
  - strategy to establish and manage the communication forum, including a steering committee and a state/EPA workgroup;
  - general administrative and functional structure for the forum, including the operational protocols, participation requirements, and members;
  - mechanisms to establish and maintain communication (including an electronic means of communication such as the dedicated website and/or listserve(s)), and organize, coordinate, and facilitate face-to-face meetings.
- b. The technical approach should also provide a description of the strategy for identifying and implementing training and information dissemination activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of WQS professionals.
- c. The technical approach should also include a milestone schedule that addresses a four-year project period and must include:
  - a breakout of the project into phases with associated tasks;
  - time frames for completion of each task and phase; and
  - a descriptive list of deliverables, including indication of ongoing and/or repeated tasks and

deliverables.

2. Programmatic Capability Past Performance (Applicant's Technical Experience and Qualifications). Submit a list of agreements, both federal and non-federal, that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting history information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience related to the proposed project and infrastructure in terms of your ability to successfully implement the project. Describe your organization's staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project goals.

3. Environmental Results:

a. Tracking Progress. Provide a clear description of the project's anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes and describe how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. See Section I. D for the discussion of anticipated outputs and outcomes from this announcement. Describe the planned strategy for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes. The applicant is expected to discuss likely interim outputs, including deliverables, as well as desired long-term outcomes.

b. Past Performance. Submit a list of funded assistance agreements, both federal and non-federal, that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five and preferably EPA agreements) and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V.

4. Specialized Experience. Describe prior experiences with establishing and administering technical or other interest groups and prior work on environmental issues, particularly in relation to implementing the CWA. Include a description of experience: (1) working on human health and environmental issues related to water quality standards, and familiarity with the requirements of the CWA; (2) coordinating state, territorial and tribal positions on environmental and public health issues with EPA and/or other federal agencies; (3) working with senior managers in state, territory, and tribal governments, and demonstrated ability in engaging water quality experts on WQS programs and related water quality issues in meetings; and (4) coordinating conferences, workshops, and training.

The Statement of Work narrative should also provide any additional information, to the extent not already covered above, necessary to evaluate the applicant under the criteria in Section V.

**C. Submission Dates and Times**

Applications sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section IV.B.2 by **4:00 P.M. EDT, August 20, 2007**. Applications submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be submitted by **11:59 P.M. EDT, August 20, 2007**. Applications received after the published closing date and time will be returned to the sender without further consideration.

**D. Intergovernmental Review**

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>

**E. Confidential Business Information**

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

**V. Application Review Information**

**A. Selection Criteria**

All eligible applications, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated and ranked based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 total point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the application package. The maximum points for each element are indicated below.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Weight (based on a 100 point scale)
---------------------	-------------------------------------

<p><b>CRITERION 1: Technical Approach to Project</b></p> <p>Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Extent and quality to which the application clearly articulates an approach to establish and manage a communication forum. <b>(9 points)</b></li> <li>2) Extent and quality to which the application clearly articulates the structure for the general administrative and functional aspects of running the forum. <b>(4 points)</b></li> <li>3) Extent and quality to which the application describes the approach to establish and maintain communication among membership and coordinate and facilitate face-to-face meetings. <b>(4 points)</b></li> <li>4) Extent and quality to which the application describes the strategy for identifying and implementing training and information dissemination activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of WQS professionals. <b>(4 points)</b></li> <li>5) Extent and quality to which the application clearly articulates a milestone schedule with tasks and anticipated deliverables (outputs and outcomes), and reporting schedule. <b>(9 points)</b></li> </ol>	<p><b>30 points total</b></p>
<p><b>CRITERION 2: Programmatic Capability/Past Performance</b></p> <p>Applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors.</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Past performance in successfully completing federally- and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years. <b>(5 points)</b></li> <li>2) History of meeting reporting requirements under federally- and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. <b>(5 points)</b></li> <li>3) Organizational experience related to the proposed project topic area and infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project. <b>(5 points)</b></li> <li>4) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. <b>(5 points)</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Note:</b> In evaluating applicants under (1) and (2) above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history will receive neutral scores for these factors (i.e., 2.5 points for item (1) and 2.5 points for item (2)).</p>	<p><b>20 points total</b></p>

<p><b>CRITERION 3: Environmental Results</b></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Extent and quality to which the application demonstrates the ability to identify and articulate anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes, as described in Section IV of the announcement. <b>(8 points)</b></li> <li>2) Extent and quality to which the application demonstrates ability and articulated plan to track and measure progress toward achieving expected outputs and outcomes. <b>(8 points)</b></li> <li>3) Extent and quality to which the application demonstrates experience documenting and/or reporting on progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. <b>(4 points)</b></li> </ol> <p><i>Note:</i> In evaluating applicants under (3) above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history will receive a neutral score for this factor (i.e., 2 points for item (3)).</p>	<p><b>20 points total</b></p>
<p><b>CRITERION 4: Specialized Experience</b></p> <p>Applications will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Extent and quality to which the application demonstrates technical expertise and/or experience working on human health and environmental issues related to water quality and familiarity with the requirements of the CWA. <b>(5 points)</b></li> <li>2) Extent and quality to which the application describes experience in coordinating environmental and public health issues with EPA and/or other federal agencies. <b>(5 points)</b></li> <li>3) Extent and quality to which the application describes experience in working with senior managers in state, territory, and tribal governments and demonstrated ability in engaging water quality experts on WQS programs and related water quality issues in meetings. <b>(10 points)</b></li> <li>4) Extent and quality to which the application describes experience in coordinating conferences, workshops, and training. <b>(10 points)</b></li> </ol>	<p><b>30 points total</b></p>

***B. Review and Selection Process***

All applications received by EPA in hard copy or submitted electronically through Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement. Applications that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and will develop a list of the most highly rated applications to submit to the Selection Official. Final funding decisions will be made by the Selection Official, based on the evaluations conducted by the review panel, and may also consider Agency priorities.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

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

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified in writing. EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and Statement of Work prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.A1. The Agency reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award under this announcement.

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

The general award and administration processes for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (“Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations”) and 40 CFR Part 31 (“Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to States and Local Governments”). A description of the Agency’s substantial involvement in the cooperative agreement will be included in the final agreement.

### ***C. DUNS Number***

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering (DUNS) number when applying for federal grants or cooperative agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or by visiting the web site at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com).

### ***D. Reporting***

In negotiating this cooperative agreement, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate reporting requirements, consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 35.115, and 35.515. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the cooperative agreement. Additionally, if travel assistance is provided to selected non-federal attendees, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating attendees benefited from the training.

### ***E. Funding Restrictions***

In accordance with EPA guidance and the OMB Circulars, as appropriate, the recipient must agree that it will not use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising or political activities (e.g., lobbying members of Congress, or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements or contracts). Funds cannot be used to pay for travel by federal agency staff. Construction and land acquisition are not allowable activities, foreign travel is not permissible, and equipment purchases require written permission from the EPA Project Officer if they were not included in the approved application. Funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the cooperative agreement and use must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. The terms and conditions of the formal assistance agreement may include additional and specific limitations on funding.

### ***F. Dispute Process***

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>.

### ***G. Administrative Capability Requirement***

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards ([http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700\\_8.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf)). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

### **VII. Agency Contact**

Note to applicants: EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below before July 25, 2007. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/funding/>. In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants or discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications.

#### **Agency Contact:**

Agnes Ortiz

Phone: (202) 566-1303

E-mail: [ortiz.agnes@epa.gov](mailto:ortiz.agnes@epa.gov)

### **VIII. Other Information**

#### ***A. Copyrights***

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