

2015/2016 EPA Urban Waters Small Grants Request for Proposals Questions and Answers

The following questions and answers are in response to the 2015/2016 EPA Urban Waters Small Grants Request for Proposals (RFP) EPA-OW-IO-15-01. As stated in the RFP: **Note to Applicants:** In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

Please understand that this is our initial feedback based on the information you've provided, and we cannot make a final decision on the proposed activities until we have reviewed a complete proposal. Our response relates solely to eligibility rather than the merits of the proposal from a ranking standpoint.

Notes

- If you're using a PC, you can search for your question using the Control + F function to do a word search. Mac users, you can search for your question using the Command + F function to do a word search.

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| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | | |
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| Question | | Answer |
| A.1 | Am I eligible to apply to the Urban Waters Small Grants RFP? | Eligible applicants are described in Section III.A of the RFP. Section III.A states that States, local governments, Indian Tribes, public and private universities and colleges, public or private nonprofit institutions/organizations, intertribal consortia, and interstate agencies. Individuals, for-profit commercial entities and all federal agencies are not eligible to apply. 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 1995 are not eligible to apply. |
| A.2 | How does my organization foster partnerships with the local community? | <p>EPA recognizes the important role of local partnerships and engagement to help solve urban runoff pollution and other water quality issues. Partnerships help connect the various areas of a watershed. Communities that live in the upper parts of the watershed can work with downstream communities to improve the quality of the entire watershed. Within these communities, the partnering between the local government, community-based organizations, local residents, and other key stakeholders helps build a resource base and leads to lasting change. This kind of partnering leads to the most innovative stormwater solutions that yield multiple benefits.</p> <p>As described in the RFP, Section IV.D.II.d, Proposals should describe the roles or planned roles of each partner in the project, and how each partner will contribute to the goals of the project. The description should demonstrate the meaningful involvement of all partners from preparation, execution of the project, through project evaluation/next steps. Partner contributions can include coordinating planning efforts, and sharing their time, expertise, and expense. EPA encourages appropriate sub-awards/contracts to community-based organizations to allow their full participation and cultivate intentional involvement of community residents.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | | |
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| Question | | Answer |
| A.3 | Are projects/applicants in Puerto Rico or other U.S. Territories eligible to apply? | Yes. As described in Section III.A. of the RFP, eligible applicants includes States, which, as defined in 2 CFR 200.90, is defined as any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any agency or instrumentality thereof exclusive of local governments. |
| A.4 | Are for-profit entities eligible to apply for an Urban Waters Small Grant? | No, for-profit entities are not eligible applicants. |
| A.5 | Are international applicants and/or projects eligible for funding? | <p>Projects that are not located within the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or territories and possessions of the United States (“the U.S.”) are not eligible for Urban Waters grants. However, international organizations that are otherwise eligible to receive a grant under the Urban Waters Small Grants solicitation may apply to carry out projects in the U.S. provided the projects are located in a U.S. Census-defined Urbanized Area as described in Section III.C of the RFP. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 102(2)(F) enables us to apply our domestic statutes, such as the Clean Water Act 104(b)(3), internationally. Without NEPA 102(2)(F), we do not have authority to award grants for international work. By not including NEPA 102(2)(F) in the RFP, we are indicating that these grants are only available for work within the U.S.</p> <p>Eligible entities are described in Section III.A of the RFP.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.6 | <p>Are the Freely Associated States (FAS) of Palau, Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia eligible?</p> <p>No. Palau, the Marshall Islands, and Micronesia are all sovereign nations independent from the United States. These countries are neither territories nor possessions of the United States; therefore, they are not eligible for the Urban Waters Small Grants, unless the proposed work occurs within the United States. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 102(2)(F) enables us to apply our domestic statutes, such as the Clean Water Act 104(b)(3), internationally. Without NEPA 102(2)(F) we do not have authority to award grants internationally. By not including NEPA 102(2)(F) in the RFP, we are indicating that these grants are only available for work located within the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or territories and possessions of the United States.</p> <p>Eligible entities are described in Section III.A of the RFP.</p> |
| A.7 | <p>My organization currently has non-profit status with the state and is in the process of applying for federal non-profit status. Are we eligible to apply?</p> <p>Yes, your organization is an eligible applicant since it is a recognized non-profit with your state. Additional information regarding eligible applicants is provided in Section III.A of the RFP.</p> |
| A.8 | <p>Can my organization apply for this grant through a fiscal sponsor if we are not a 501(c)(3) but do urban river work?</p> <p>No, your organization may not apply for an EPA grant through a "fiscal sponsor." Your organization must apply for a grant in its own name and be eligible for funding under the terms of the Urban Waters RFP. EPA does not recognize the "fiscal sponsor" concept as a means of allowing ineligible organizations and individuals to apply for EPA funding. Please note, however, that your organization does not have to have 501(c)(3) status to be eligible for funding if it is incorporated under state law as a non-profit or not-for-profit organization. Individuals and for profit firms are not eligible to apply for Urban Waters funding under any circumstances.</p> |
| A.9 | <p>Can individuals apply for the grant?</p> <p>No, individuals are not eligible to apply for Urban Waters Small Grants.</p> |
| A.10 | <p>Can for-profit businesses apply for the grant?</p> <p>No, for-profit businesses are not eligible to apply for Urban Waters Small Grants.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.11 My 501(c)(3) organization has a federal affairs office that lobbies at the federal level. Are we an eligible applicant for the Urban Waters Small Grant? | If an organization is exempt from taxation under 501(c)(3), the fact that it uses some of its own funds for lobbying does not render the applicant ineligible. Please note that EPA funds may not be used for lobbying. Organizations exempt from taxation under 501(c)(4) that lobby are not eligible for grants by statute (The Lobbying Disclosure Act). |
| A.12 Can public schools apply? | Yes, public schools are eligible entities that may apply. |
| A.13 Can my project include design and/or construction projects? | A design project would generally be an eligible activity for funding. However, construction projects generally would not be an eligible activity under our funding authorities (with the exception of demonstration projects). |
| A.14 Are educational programs eligible for funding under this grant program? | Yes, education-related activities are generally eligible under CWA 104(b)(3), the funding authority for these grants. Please review Section I.D for a detailed description of this statutory authority and Section I.A and Appendix A for some information on and examples of eligible projects. |
| A.15 What age or stakeholder group is targeted? | We are not targeting any specific groups under this announcement. Please see the eligible applicants' information in Section III.A of the RFP. |
| A.16 Can funds be used on federal land? | Urban Waters Small Grants may not be used for projects that improve federal lands or otherwise directly benefit the federal government. To do so would violate the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act by providing a service for the direct use or benefit of the federal government. However, some project activities (such as community meetings or workshops, etc.) may be held on federal lands or in federal facilities. |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.17 What is considered a demonstration project? | <p>Demonstrations are projects that involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches.</p> <p>If an applicant requests funding under the demonstration project category, then the applicant must describe how it meets this requirement.</p> <p>A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project.</p> |
| A.18 Does all the proposed work have to take place on public property? | No, proposed activities do not have to take place on public property. There are no restrictions to specific land jurisdictions under this announcement, except that Urban Waters Small Grants cannot be used for projects that improve federal lands or otherwise directly benefit the federal government. |
| A.19 Is this grant opportunity open for land acquisition projects for watershed areas? | No, funds may not be used towards land acquisitions under this announcement. |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| A.20 | <p>Would multiple applicants from the same institution (a university, for example) be eligible to submit separate, unique applications?</p> | <p>Under this competition, only one proposal can be submitted per applicant. If an applicant submits more than one proposal, EPA will contact them before the review process begins to determine which one will be withdrawn. In the example you provided, that eligible entity would be the university. Please note that Principal Investigators are ineligible applicants; individuals are not eligible to apply under this announcement. However, applicants may list other eligible applicants as partners on proposals even if the partner also submits a proposal to EPA.</p> <p>For the purposes of this RFP, EPA considers governmental units to be a single applicant per the definition of <i>Grantee</i> in 2 CFR 1500 and they may submit <u>only one</u> proposal to EPA. The Agency will not accept proposals from more than one agency of the same governmental unit. EPA recognizes, however, that in some states the educational institutions comprising the state university system are separate legal entities under state law. The Agency will consider separate proposals from different components of the same state university system on a case by case basis (i.e., when state law authorizes each institution in a state university system to contract in its own name).</p> |
| A.21 | <p>Can an entity serve as a partner on multiple grant applications? Would this rule both applications out?</p> | <p>Yes, an entity may serve as a partner on multiple grant applications. To do so would not render either application ineligible. In addition, an organization can submit a proposal as the primary applicant and also support the work of other organizations by being a partner.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.22 Please explain what EPA’s process will be if it’s determined that more than one proposal has been submitted by an applicant. | <p>Under this competition, only one proposal can be submitted per applicant. If an applicant submits more than one proposal, EPA will contact the applicant before the review process begins to determine which proposal will be withdrawn. All applicants from the same legal entity will be contacted on the same day and notified that EPA has received more than one proposal from their organization. Applicants will then be given an opportunity to work internally to determine which proposal will move forward in the review process for that organization. The organization must use its discretion in establishing the selection process to determine which proposal will be submitted on its behalf for the Urban Waters Small Grants. If the organization is not able to communicate a decision within 48 hours of being contacted by EPA, EPA will accept the proposal that was submitted first.</p> <p>For the purposes of this RFP, EPA considers governmental units to be a single applicant per the definition of <i>Grantee</i> in 2 CFR 1500 and they may submit <u>only one</u> proposal to EPA. The Agency will not accept proposals from more than one agency of the same governmental unit. However, EPA recognizes that in some states components of the state university system are separate governmental units under state law and the Agency will consider proposals from different components of a state university system on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Please note that applicants may list other eligible applicants as partners on proposals even if the partner also submits a proposal to EPA.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.23 Can a federal agency be a sub-grantee (i.e., subawardee) on the grant? | <p>The answer to whether a Federal agency can be a sub-grantee (i.e., whether EPA grant funds may be used to reimburse another federal agency), depends on whether that agency has statutory authority to receive and retain reimbursement for providing services to nonfederal organizations. For example, our understanding is that the U.S. Geological Survey has the requisite authority and all federal agencies may perform specialized scientific research for state and local governments under the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act. We take the position that the transaction is neither a sub-grant (i.e., subaward) nor a procurement contract but is governed by the terms of the federal statute which authorizes reimbursement. In such a case, there would be no need for competition under the procurement rules or compliance with the OMB Circulars.</p> <p>Please note, that in such a scenario, the other federal agency would not be able to enter into an interagency agreement (IA) with EPA to be reimbursed. IAs are not permissible under this announcement.</p> |
| A.24 Will you please send me detailed information on what the eligibility requirements are to receive an Urban Waters Small Grants program? Thank you. | See Section III.A in the RFP for detailed information on applicant eligibility. See Section III.C in the RFP for detailed information on project eligibility. |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.25 I'm hoping you can tell me if being a past Urban Waters Small Grants recipient would affect our competitiveness for a grant in this new round. May we apply for a second one a) as a primary applicant, or b) as a partner organization? If so, can we solicit funds for the same ongoing project, or can we only apply for funds for a different project and location? | <p>Organizations who have received a previous Urban Waters Small Grant are eligible for funding. Note that one evaluation criterion for proposals is Past Performance, as discussed in Section V.B of the RFP.</p> <p>Past recipients may apply as a primary applicant and/or may participate as a partner organization. However, only one proposal may be submitted per primary applicant. Please see Section III.A of the RFP, and refer to the response to Question A.22.</p> <p>Past recipients may apply for funding for the same ongoing project that was previously funded if the project meets the threshold criteria in Section III.C in the RFP. Please also review the evaluation criteria in the RFP under Section V.A and the Urban Waters Small Grants Program Objectives under Section I.A to ensure that the project is appropriate for this competition.</p> <p>Past recipients may also apply for funding of a different project and location than was previously funded, as long as the newly proposed project meets the threshold criteria (see Section III.C of the RFP).</p> |
| A.26 My project area is adjacent and influences an area downstream and within an eligible geographic area but is outside of the defined boundary line of an eligible geographic area. | If a project is located outside the defined boundary line of an eligible geographic area, it is not eligible. |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| A.27 | <p>Does my office have to be located within the Eligible Geographic Area we're working in? Would my project be eligible if it takes place within the Eligible Geographic Area, but the support work happens in my office that is not within the Eligible Geographic Area?</p> | <p>An eligible applicant's office or mailing address does not need to be located within an Eligible Geographic Area. As discussed in Section III.C of the RFP, proposed project activities must take place entirely within one of the Eligible Geographic Areas, as illustrated on the interactive map provided on the Urban Waters Small Grants mapping website at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-mapping</p> <p>Project activities that take place entirely within one of the Eligible Geographic Areas, but that are supported by an office located outside of the Eligible Geographic Area, could be eligible for funding through this grant.</p> |
| A.28 | <p>Is there a limit to how many applications EPA is reviewing per Eligible Geographic Area?</p> | <p>No, there is no limit to the number of proposals that may be submitted per Eligible Geographic Area. EPA encourages all eligible applicants to apply.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| <p>A.29 Can the active engagement of underserved communities be at both the site of the work and in the community where the lead institution resides? For example, our proposed lead institution is one hour away from one of our community sites of interest.</p> | <p>Project activities must take place entirely within one of the Eligible Geographic Areas, as illustrated on the interactive map provided on the Urban Waters Small Grants mapping website at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-mapping</p> <p>If project activities propose the implementation of the project at two sites, one within the Eligible Geographic Area and one outside of it, the entire proposal may be deemed ineligible. However, if project activities within an Eligible Geographic Area result in participation from and/or provide benefits to communities located outside the Eligible Geographic Area, it would not deem the project ineligible.</p> <p>For example, if the project consists of holding a community planning meeting for a specific neighborhood (Neighborhood A) within an Eligible Geographic Area, and an adjacent neighborhood (Neighborhood B) that is outside of the Eligible Geographic Area wants to participate, this project activity is eligible for funding. However, if the project consists of holding community planning meetings for Neighborhoods A and B, grants funds may <u>not</u> be used towards the Neighborhood B community planning meeting.</p> <p>Note that grant funds may be used for project support work (e.g., grant management activities/paperwork, indirect costs, etc) that takes place at an office located outside of an Eligible Geographic Area. (Please also see Question A.27).</p> |
| <p>A.30 May I view a listing of past awards made by this program?</p> | <p>Information on past recipients may be found at the following links: http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/20112012-grant-recipients and http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/20132014-grant-recipients</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| A.31 | <p>Would the funding of dissertation research experiments, which would train a PhD student, be eligible for funding under this opportunity?</p> | <p>Yes, in general, dissertation research is eligible for funding. However, individuals are not eligible to apply for Urban Waters Small Grants. Please closely review all eligibility requirements in Section III.C.</p> |
| A.32 | <p>I would like to know if projects that collect data about sediment quality, including taking and analyzing samples, compiling existing data, assessment, etc. would be eligible under this grant.</p> | <p>Based on the information you've provided, it appears the proposed project is eligible under our statutory funding authority, Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act. Please carefully read the threshold eligibility requirements described in the Section III of the RFP. We also encourage you to review Appendix A for a non-exhaustive list of project examples.</p> <p>Please note that this is our initial feedback based on the information you've provided, and we cannot make a final decision on the proposed activities until we have reviewed a complete proposal. Our response relates solely to eligibility rather than the merits of the proposal from a ranking standpoint. In fairness to all applicants, we cannot screen potential projects or applications prior to their submission through the established process. To do so would compromise an open and fair competition for the best project ideas to advance the restoration of urban waters.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.33 I'd like to have a contact person whom I may speak with regarding the Urban Waters Small Grants program. | <p>All questions should be submitted in writing to urbanwaters@epa.gov. In supporting an open and fair competition, we are posting all submitted questions and the responses on this Q&A document. The Q&A document is updated every other week with new questions and answers during the open period through Nov 6 (see posting schedule at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-questions).</p> <p>Please refer to Sections I and III of the RFP to understand the eligibility requirements proposals must meet in order to be considered for funding. In addition, Appendix A of the RFP provides project examples.</p> <p>You may also want to see the list of past recipients and their projects, available at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/20112012-grant-recipients and http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/20132014-grant-recipients.</p> |
| A.34 How were the Eligible Geographic Areas chosen? | <p>The Eligible Geographic Areas are based on the U.S. Census-defined Urbanized Areas and the 12-digit hydrologic unit code system (HUC-12) that defines the watershed. The HUC system is a national standard watershed system based on surface hydrologic features and delineated by the U.S. Geological Survey.</p> |
| A.35 How long is the project period? | <p>Funded cooperative agreements will have a one- to two-year project period. Project periods of less than one year are eligible for funding. Project periods cannot exceed two years.</p> <p>We encourage you to review Section I of the RFP to understand the goals and objectives of the Small Grants program.</p> |
| A.36 Can partnering organizations request funding for the same project? | <p>Yes, there is no limit on the number of organizations that can submit proposals for the same project idea.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.37 Is the \$60,000 federal limit for this request only or for the entire project (i.e., can another federal grant be used with this grant for the project as long as there is enough non-federal match for both)? | You may receive support for an entire project with \$60,000 in funds from the Urban Waters Small Grant and support from another federal grant(s) as long as you properly account for costs charged to each federal grant and separately meet the match requirements for both grants. You may not charge different federal grants for the same costs. Please note the proposal being submitted in response to the Urban Waters Small Grants RFP should focus on what is being requested in the announcement. The proposal will be evaluated on what potential Urban Waters funds will be used to do, as described in Sections IV and V of the RFP. |
| A.38 If funding were requested to educate community members about green infrastructure/LID, could installation of such practices by volunteers be considered match (even though LID implementation is not an eligible activity for funding)? | No, that would not be eligible. Cost share/match funds must be used for eligible costs under CWA 104(3)(b). |
| A.39 Can the project be an improvement, or refinement, on practices already being employed? Or must it be a brand new concept? | Yes, eligible projects may be an improvement or refinement of an ongoing project provided the activities are eligible for funding under CWA 104(b)(3). |
| A.40 Could a rain garden, when used as part of training and teaching, be considered a demonstration project, and so be eligible for use of grant funds? | No. A rain garden is a well-known green infrastructure practice, and is not considered a demonstration project under our statutory funding authority. Please review the response to Question A.17 and Section I.C of the RFP to see the requirements of what may be considered a demonstration project. |
| A.41 If the subawardee is a non-profit or educational organization and helped to develop the proposal, is there a chance that they would not be eligible? | If the subaward is a proper one, the fact that a subawardee helped develop the proposal would not make the subawardee ineligible. Please see the response to Question B.17 on the definition of a proper sub-award. Please also carefully review the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm . |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.42 Is stormdrain stenciling an appropriate component for this grant? What about the installation of signage? | The project activities you describe appear to be eligible for funding under our statutory funding authority, Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Waters Act. This is based on the assumption that stenciling and the signage is to convey information or increase knowledge. Please note that this is our initial feedback based on the information you've provided, and we cannot make a final decision on the proposed activities until we have reviewed a complete proposal. Our response relates solely to eligibility rather than the merits of the proposal from a ranking standpoint. |
| A.43 Are Brownfield project areas eligible? On sites that have Brownfield Area Planning grant funding already? | The geographic requirement, per the threshold eligibility criteria as discussed in Section III of the RFP, is that projects take place entirely within one of the Eligible Geographic Areas, as illustrated on the interactive map provided on the Urban Waters Small Grants Mapping website at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-mapping . As long as the project area is within one the Eligible Geographic Areas as illustrated on the interactive map provided on the Urban Waters mapping website, the project area is eligible, regardless of whether or not it is a Brownfield project area. If that eligible project area is also a current or past recipient of a Brownfield Area Planning grant, that would not deem the project ineligible. Please review the threshold requirements carefully, as described in Section III of the RFP. |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.44 Can one organization apply for three separate projects in three areas? For example, my organization works across a state and would like to carry out a project in three separate eligible areas to emphasize cross-contextual collaboration. | <p>Please carefully read the threshold eligibility requirements described in the Section III.C of the RFP.</p> <p>Per Threshold Criteria #4, only one proposal can be submitted per applicant. If an applicant submits more than one proposal, EPA will contact them before the review process begins to determine which one will be withdrawn. If the applicant is not able to communicate a decision within 48 hours of being contacted by EPA, EPA will accept the proposal which was submitted first. Additional information regarding the one proposal per applicant requirement may be found on the questions & answers document available at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-questions.</p> <p>Per Threshold Criteria #2, proposed project activities must take place entirely within one of the Eligible Geographic Areas, as illustrated on the interactive map provided on the Urban Waters Small Grants mapping website at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-mapping. EPA will determine whether applicants have met this requirement by reviewing the required project area map, which must correctly include the elements outlined in Section IV.D.4.</p> <p>Note that eligible applicants do not need to be located within an Eligible Geographic Area, but their project areas where the work will be done do.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.45 Is the location of my proposed project in an eligible geographic area? | <p>Go to the Urban Waters Small Grants mapping website at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-mapping and input your project location.</p> <p>The geographic areas that are eligible under this RFP are distinguished by the blue clusters within the Urban Waters Small Grants Interactive Mapping Website. As discussed in Section III.C of the RFP, proposed project activities must take place entirely within one of the Eligible Geographic Areas (blue cluster).</p> <p>In their proposals, applicants cannot propose project activities that take place in more than one Eligible Geographic Area. If an applicant submits an application for project activities that takes place in more than one Eligible Geographic Area, the application will not be reviewed. EPA encourages community involvement and the transfer of results. Projects can include participation from, and provide benefits to, communities outside of the Eligible Geographic Areas.</p> <p>EPA will determine whether applicants have met the geographic eligibility requirement by reviewing the proposal’s required project area map, which must correctly include the elements outlined in Section IV.D.3 in the RFP. If EPA cannot make this determination in its review of the map, applicants will be contacted for clarification.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.46 Can a community college apply for a grant under this competition? | Eligible applicants include States, local governments, Indian Tribes, public and private universities and colleges, public or private nonprofit institutions/organizations, intertribal consortia, and interstate agencies. See Section III.A for more details. Individuals, for-profit commercial entities and all federal agencies are not eligible to apply. 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 1995 are not eligible to apply. |
| A.47 Is my project activity eligible to receive a grant under this competition? | <p>We have received many questions regarding the eligibility of specific projects. It is difficult to determine eligibility of your proposed project based on the short descriptions in your questions, and we cannot provide feedback on draft proposals or provide advice on how to respond to the ranking criteria. Therefore, we encourage you to carefully read the threshold eligibility requirements described in the Section III.C of the RFP. Please see section III.D of the RFP for ineligible project activities. We also encourage you to review Appendix A for a non-exhaustive list of project examples.</p> <p>In addition, For the 2015/2016 cycle of the Urban Waters Small Grants competition, proposed project activities must take place entirely within one of the Eligible Geographic Areas, as outlined in Section I.B of the RFP.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | |
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| Question | Answer |
| A.48 What is an underserved community? | For purposes of this announcement, the term “underserved communities” refers to communities with environmental justice concerns and/or susceptible populations. Communities with environmental justice concerns include minority, low-income, tribal, and indigenous populations or communities in the United States that potentially experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks as a result of greater vulnerability to environmental hazards. This increased vulnerability may be attributable to an accumulation of both negative and lack of positive environmental, health, economic, or social conditions within these populations or communities. Susceptible populations include groups that are at a high risk of suffering the adverse effects of environmental hazards such as, but not limited to, pregnant women, the elderly and young children. |
| A.49 A potential applicant is interested in placing traditional SW BMPs while including ongoing education, which is the nature of their mission and organization. Is it correct to say that even with the ongoing education, installation of a traditional LID BMP cannot be considered under this grant? | <p>Please refer to Section III.D of the RFP, which provides examples of project activities that are generally not eligible for funding under this announcement. In some cases, the project activity might be eligible for funding if it is part of a demonstration project or a training/education project. Please note that if not part of a demonstration project or training/education project (considered on case by case basis), proposals for the construction or installation of stormwater infrastructure improvements, including low-impact development and green infrastructure, are not eligible for funding under this announcement.</p> <p>If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.</p> |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| A.50 | Is there any way to modify the Eligible Geographic Areas to include more river frontage along the Rio Grande or other watersheds? | In their proposals, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed project activities take place entirely within one of the Eligible Geographic Areas, as illustrated on the interactive map provided on the Urban Waters Small Grants mapping website at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-mapping . Projects that include areas outside of the current Eligible Geographic Areas will be considered ineligible. |
| A.51 | Are projects in saltwater, harbors, or brackish estuaries eligible for this grant? | Yes, as long as your entire project area is located within one eligible geographic area (blue cluster on the map). Please refer to FAQ A.46 for instructions on how to use the UWSG mapping tool. |
| A.52 | Can I address multiple watersheds or towns within my county for the project area? | Yes, as long as your entire project area is located within one eligible geographic area (blue cluster on the map). Please refer to FAQ A.46 for instructions on how to use the UWSG mapping tool. |
| A.53 | Are state-wide programs eligible? | Yes, as long as the entire project area is located within one eligible geographic area (blue cluster on the map). Please refer to FAQ A.46 for instructions on how to use the UWSG mapping tool. In addition, please carefully read the threshold eligibility requirements described in the Section III.C of the RFP. |
| A.54 | Can I resubmit a proposal that was submitted during an earlier UWSG competition. | Yes, but be sure to carefully review this year’s RFP. Many components of this year’s RFP have changed, including the eligibility requirements. These changes may deem your past proposal ineligible. |
| A.55 | If the focus of our proposal is on Green Infrastructure in multiple towns within one large watershed, do we list the streams or can we list the town/cities? | As stated in the RFP Section D.3.I., please list the name of the Urban Water Body your project is located in, including its location and EPA Region. If your project is tied to multiple urban water bodies within ONE eligible geographic region please list ALL of the urban water bodies, locations, and EPA Regions. |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| A.56 | Are there specific names applicants should use to reference the Urban Water Body addressed by the proposal? | This year, the Urban Waters Small Grants Program did not name specific urban water bodies as eligible for this year's competition. Rather they provided a mapping tool, found at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-mapping , for applicants to use to see if their project area is eligible. Per Section D.3.I. of the RFP, please list the name of the Urban Water Body including the location and EPA Region. If your project is tied to multiple urban water bodies within ONE eligible geographic region please list ALL of the urban water bodies, locations, and EPA Regions. |
| A.57 | Is the project area map included in the 11-page limit? | Yes. The Narrative Proposal (including cover page and project area map) must be limited to no more than 11 single-spaced, typewritten 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper). |
| A.58 | Is there page-size limitation? | Yes. The Narrative Proposal (including cover page and project area map) must be limited to no more than 11 single-spaced, typewritten 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper). |
| A.59 | Are letters of support included in the 11-page limit? | No. They are considered supporting documentation, which is not counted against the Narrative Proposal page limit. |

| A. Threshold Issues – Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| A.60 | <p>For demonstration projects, I was hoping to clarify this statement "Demonstration projects must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches." Does that consider geographical variance? Something may be widely practiced in one region, but very new or innovative in a different state or location.</p> | <p>If the proposal is a demonstration project, then the applicant must describe how it meets the following requirement. Demonstration projects must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches. EPA expects that the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project.</p> <p>For proposals that include demonstration projects, the applicant must describe how the project meets the above requirements. Examples of what may be considered demonstration projects are provided in the questions & answers document available at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-questions. Also refer to Section III. D. Ineligible Project Activities.</p> <p>We cannot make determinations on whether your project is eligible until we have received a full proposal package.</p> |
| A.61 | <p>Is there a population requirement a city needs to meet in order to be eligible for an Urban Waters Small Grant?</p> | <p>No, the population of a city is not a threshold criterion for eligibility purposes.</p> |

| B. Budget/Funding Issues | | |
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| Question | | Answer |
| B.1 | Is there a requirement for matching? | Yes. For this RFP, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of \$4,000 as the non-federal cost share/match. In-kind cost share is allowed. |
| B.2 | Do I need an indirect cost rate to apply for an Urban Waters Small Grant? | No, having a federally approved indirect cost rate is not a requirement for applying for an Urban Waters Small Grant. However, if you do request indirect costs on line 22 of the SF 424-A, and do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final or provisional) with a cognizant federal agency, and EPA preliminarily selects you for an award and requests a final application, then you must have submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to your cognizant federal agency at the time of final application submission to EPA. We will assist you in identifying the cognizant federal agency. Please note: Non-profit recipients that do not have an approved indirect cost (IDC) rate, and where EPA is their cognizant agency, may use a flat 10% IDC rate. Recipients that opt to use the 10% flat rate are obligated to use the flat rate for the life of the grant award. |
| B.3 | Can grant funds be used for salary for interns to work on our Urban Waters Small Grant project? | Yes, salaries for employees and interns hired as employees would be an eligible expense under this grant provided the employees perform work that is necessary to carry out the EPA funded project. Please note that in accordance with the instructions in Section IV.C. of the RFP, if salary costs are included in the proposed budget, they should be shown in the SF 424-A. |
| B.4 | Can award recipients incur pre-award costs? | Yes, recipients may incur pre-award costs to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award and only with the written approval of the Federal awarding agency. Please see 2 CFR § 200.458 for more information. Please note that your organization may only incur pre-award costs "directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the Federal award where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work." In the context of competitive funding, EPA interprets this provision to allow pre-award costs only after an organization has been notified that the Agency has selected it for an award. |

| B. Budget/Funding Issues | | |
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| Question | | Answer |
| B.5 | If our partner is contributing personnel time, how is that reflected in the budget? We do not plan to make a subaward to our partner, because they are not receiving funds. | If your partners are contributing personnel time, this would be considered in-kind contributions and would count towards the \$4,000 cost share/match requirement provided the contributions comply with 2 CFR § 200.306as applicable. It should be included as a line item in the SF424-A, in Section A (Non-Federal (d)), and Section B ((h) "Other"), along with a brief explanation in the budget narrative. Please note that if your organization will also be contributing personnel time from its own employees towards cost share/match, the value of those contributions are considered "Personnel" costs. |
| B.6 | Is the \$40K to \$60K over both years or is it \$40K-\$60K each year for two years? Are awards given in lump sum, or by reimbursement? | Once the grant is awarded, the Agency will obligate the total award amount (\$40K - \$60K for the two years) at the time of the award. EPA does not award "lump sum" grants that recipients may draw down at one time. Grantees are paid in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.305 which provide that grantees may draw down funds only to meet immediate cash disbursement needs. |
| B.7 | Can this grant be used by a state entity to send staff for stream restoration or other training classes? | Yes. As long as the training is part of an eligible activity under Section I.D of the RFP, it would be eligible for funding. |
| B.8 | What are fringe benefits? | Fringe benefit costs are those costs for personnel employment other than the employees' direct income (i.e., employer's portion of FICA insurance, retirement, sick leave, holiday pay, and vacation cost). Such costs should be included in line 6(b) of Section B of the Standard Form (SF) 424A. Helpful tips on writing a budget may be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/ogd_budget_detail_guidance.pdf . See also Appendix B, Budget Sample, in the RFP. |
| B.9 | What is the dollar range of the grants? | Applicants may not request more than \$60,000 in federal funding – proposals requesting more than \$60,000 in federal funds will not be reviewed. While there is no minimum, EPA suggests applicants request at least approximately \$40,000 in federal funds. A minimum non-federal cost share/match of \$4,000 is required (see Section III.B for information on the cost share/match requirement). It is anticipated that funded cooperative agreements will have a two-year project period. |

| B. Budget/Funding Issues | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| B.10 | <p>Can municipalities use these funds to contract with consultants?</p> | <p>Yes, funds may be used to contract with consultants to perform eligible activities under CWA 104(b)(3). Please note that municipal recipients must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200, as appropriate. Please see CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm for further details on the requirements for acquiring contract services and for guidance on how to address the use of contracts as a part of your budget narrative. Please note that EPA rarely accepts sole-source justifications for contracts for consultants even if the firm or individual is a "partner" on the proposal or prepares it on behalf of an eligible applicant.</p> |
| B.11 | <p>Does the \$4,000 match deduct from the \$60,000 maximum funding limit?</p> | <p>No, cost share/match is not considered part of the maximum federal request of \$60,000; however, cost share/match dollars must be spent on activities that would be deemed eligible under CWA 104(b)(3), the funding authority for this grant program. In addition, applicants need to account for cost share/match in the total project costs and identify how cost share/match funds will be used to support the grant in their Standard Form (SF) 424-A and budget narrative.</p> |
| B.12 | <p>The minimum match amount is \$4,000. Will proposals with higher match amounts be given a higher score?</p> | <p>No, proposals with a higher cost share/match value will not be awarded more points during application review. Please see Section V.A of the RFP which describes the selection criteria used to evaluate all proposals.</p> |
| B.13 | <p>Do land easements and land grants qualify as in-kind contributions?</p> | <p>Yes, land easement and land grants would qualify as in-kind contributions. Please be sure to see Section III.B for more information on in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions such as donations of interests in land are subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements described in 2 CFR § 200.306, as applicable.</p> |
| B.14 | <p>Is grant administration an eligible expense?</p> | <p>Yes, provided the recipient normally charges its grants directly for actual costs for grant administration rather than including the costs for this function in its indirect cost rate. If your organization has a federal negotiated indirect cost rate you should check with your accountant to ensure that charging grant administration fees directly complies with the applicable OMB Cost Principals.</p> |

| B. Budget/Funding Issues | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| B.15 | <p>Should the committed dollar amount from partners be added to our total match amount? If we have several partners and one partner intends to pay for a part of the proposed project that is an ineligible activity for funding under 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (e.g., construction or implementation activity), and this contributed amount is in addition to the \$4,000 match requirement, would this contribution also be considered match and therefore, be limited to the statutory funding authority (i.e., CWA 104(b)(3))?</p> | <p>Contributions from partner organizations may count towards the cost share/match requirement, subject to the rules regarding eligibility, allowability and documentation, as discussed in Section III.B of the RFP. Costs for ineligible activities, such as construction, cannot be used as match, but as long as the \$4,000 cost share/match requirement is properly met, there is no constraint on the contributions from other organizations. Leveraged dollars for ineligible activities (e.g., construction or implementation activities) should not be included as the total project cost of the proposed budget.</p> |
| B.16 | <p>Is the budget narrative part of the 11-page limit?</p> | <p>Yes. Please note that this is separate from SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs), which is considered an attachment to the proposal.</p> |
| B.17 | <p>How does EPA define a sub-award?</p> | <p>Please see CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm for further details on sub-awards. Sub-awards, also referred to as sub-grants, are funds awarded by the grantee to a nonprofit organization, public or private university (but not a proprietary school) or governmental unit that, as a partner, is undertaking activities in support of the funded project. These activities must be part of the organization’s mission. Sub-awards are strictly cost-based transactions subject to the cost allowability and documentation standards in the federal grant regulations and there is no “profit” for the subawardee. As stated in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision, “applicants must not use sub-awards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for-profit firms or individual consultants.”</p> |
| B.18 | <p>When will awards be selected and when will funds flow?</p> | <p>Applicants will learn whether or not their submission is successful in Spring of 2015. We expect to make awards in Summer 2015. Projects selected for award may begin once the final award has been issued.</p> |

| B. Budget/Funding Issues | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| B.19 | <p>Can the \$4k match be in the form of a grant from a different source?</p> | <p>It depends on whether the grant is from another federal agency or from a nonfederal source. Grants from nonfederal sources may be used as match to the extent that the nonfederal source permits. Funds from one federal grant may not be used to meet a match requirement for another federal grant unless there is legal authority to do so. An example of such authority is HUD's Community Development Block Grant statute. EPA does not have the legal authority to allow you to use federal funds to meet the match requirement for the Urban Waters Small Grant program.</p> |
| B.20 | <p>What are the odds of getting funded? Do you have historical data for this RFP?</p> | <p>The total estimated funding available for the awards under this competition is anticipated to be approximately \$1.6 million. EPA Regional Offices will award the cooperative agreements for projects selected under this announcement. It is anticipated that each EPA Regional Office will award approximately two to three cooperative agreements, totaling 20-30 awards nationally under this announcement. Funding is contingent upon Agency funding levels, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations.</p> <p>This is the 3rd competition of the Urban Waters Small Grants program. Please visit the small grants recipient webpages for more information on the previous grant competition: http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/20112012-grant-recipients and http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/20132014-grant-recipients. As discussed on the website, the 2011/2012 competition was national in scope and nearly 600 proposals were submitted. Of those proposals, 55 were selected for an award. In the 2013/2014 competition, which had a geographic focus, we received over 90 proposals and 37 were selected for an award. This is a highly competitive grants program.</p> |
| B.21 | <p>Is research equipment an eligible expense?</p> | <p>In general, funds may be used to purchase equipment and material(s) to support an activity that is eligible for funding under the Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3), our statutory funding authority for this announcement.</p> <p>EPA's cost principles address the allowability of costs at 2 CFR Subpart E. The purchase of research equipment requires prior written approval by the project officer.</p> |

| B. Budget/Funding Issues | | |
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| Question | | Answer |
| B.22 | We have a negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, which is 7 pages (includes IDC and Fringe Benefit Rates), does this go into the supporting documents section OR is it placed with the budget narrative and if so, does it count against the project description 11 page limit? | The Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is part of the SF 424A and not subject to the page limit expressed in the RFP. So, it does not count towards the 11-page limit of the proposal narrative. |
| B.23 | We understand that consultants have to be competitively bid. Do we have to competitively bid our non-profit partners who will receive subawards? | No, subawardees do not have to be competitively bid, as long as it is a proper subaward. Please refer to the response to Question B.17. |
| B.24 | Are we allowed to have a small business as a sub-contract? | In general, it is permissible to include contracts as a part of your proposal. Please note, however, that applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200, as appropriate. Please see CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm for further details on the requirements for acquiring contract services and for guidance on how to address the use of contracts as a part of your budget narrative. |
| B.25 | Are administration costs eligible? | Yes, administration costs are allowable as direct costs provided your organization does not include the same types of costs in the pool for calculating a federally approved indirect cost rate. You should consult with your organization's accountant if your organization has a federal indirect cost rate to ensure that this requirement is met. |
| B.26 | Can the cost share/match come from local or state grants? | Yes, local or state grants are considered allowable sources of non-federal funds. Per Section III.B. of the RFP, the cost share/match must come from non-federal sources and be used for eligible and allowable project costs. |

| B. Budget/Funding Issues | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| B.27 | <p>What is the date range in which funds awarded through this grant can be spent?</p> | <p>Per Section VI.A., Award Notices, EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by March 31, 2016. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal or the project contact listed in the proposal. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by approximately August 2, 2016. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.</p> |
| B.28 | <p>Can additional federal funding be added to an awarded UWSG to allow for additional activities not funded as part of the original grant?</p> | <p>Urban Waters Small Grants can fund a portion of a larger project. EPA encourages leveraging of funding. However, applicants must describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of costs for each work plan component/activity including the use of the cost share/match funds. Other federal grants may not be used as cost share/match without specific statutory authority. In order to be considered for funding, all applicants must describe in their proposal submission how they will contribute the minimum cost share/match requirement.</p> |

| B. Budget/Funding Issues | | |
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| | Question | Answer |
| B.29 | Please clarify whether the EPA-sponsored Urban Waters Learning Network training session discussed in Section VI.E. is a requirement for receiving the grant. Are the expenses for attendance at this training session required to be in the application budget? If a grantee (receiving official notification of award) does not attend this training session, does that forfeit or otherwise violate/cancel the award? In other words, will attendance be a condition of the award? | The EPA-sponsored Urban Waters Learning Network training session, which will be hosted by River Network and Groundwork USA at River Rally 2017, is a required training for one representative from the recipient organization. The recipient may use the cooperative agreement funds or in-kind funds to pay for associated travel, lodging, and registration costs to attend the in-person training session. These costs must be included in the submitted proposal budget as described in Section IV.D.3. To estimate registration costs, you can refer to the fees associated with the 2016 River Rally event, which can be found on the web at http://www.rivernet.org/programs/river-rally . To estimate travel and lodging, you can estimate rates associated with travel to the Great Lakes region. |
| B.30 | Section VI.F, Urban Waters Learning Network, does not specify the costs associated with membership in the Urban Waters Learning Network, participation in the conference calls, webinars, virtual and in-person trainings, especially those where the recipient is “expected to attend”, or “must attend”. Can you please specify those costs and technical capabilities that we must have in order to participate? | There are no fees associated with membership in the Urban Waters Learning Network. Within the first 30 days of receipt of the award, the recipient is required to join Basecamp.com, the Learning Network virtual platform for network communications. This platform is free to the recipient’s organization. You’ll need a computer and internet connection. Membership includes free access to the two Learning Network online training webinars where attendance is required by all UWSG recipients. The online training webinars are expected to each be up to two hours in length and one will be grants management training. The exact dates are yet to be determined; it is anticipated they will take place between October 2016 and April 2017. |
| B.31 | If a recipient is able to meet the requirements of Section VI.F (Urban Waters Learning Network), but not Section VI.E (Required In-Person Training for Recipients), are the requirements of the solicitation/grant met? We are a local government applicant with no ability to budget for travel funds/conference fees as required to meet the standards in Section E. Before we forego this funding, which would meet a great need for us, we are asking if there is any flexibility in this regard. | The requirements specified in Sections VI.E and VI.F in the Urban Waters Small Grants Request for Proposals must be met for a proposal to be considered for award. EPA provides flexibility for training attendance by allowing use of cooperative agreement funds or in-kind funds to pay for training related costs. |

| C. Evaluation Issues | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| C.1 | <p>Since the applicant is the entity (e.g. a university), does the performance on past federal grants apply to the “applicant” or the individual submitting the grant? If it is the “applicant”, that could present a problem for individuals working at large universities.</p> | <p>In Section V.A of the RFP, “Past Performance” refers to the applicant’s experience in managing federal or non-federal funding received through assistance agreements. Individuals are not eligible applicants and although they may have specific expertise to contribute to the project, their contributions may be reflected in addressing other criteria such as “Programmatic Capability.” If the applicant is a university, the “Past Performance” criterion would be that of the university, the entity managing the grant. As indicated in the RFP, the applicant may cite experience with federal and non-federal assistance agreements. (Note that grants are assistance agreements, while contracts are not.)</p> |
| C.2 | <p>Since exact start dates are unknown, how specific should timelines be?</p> | <p>We anticipate making final awards in Summer of 2015. Applicants may begin their projects once the final award has been issued. Please see Section IV of the RFP, which describes what the project milestone schedule should entail.</p> |
| C.3 | <p>Should the objectives be in the same order as listed in Section IV in the RFP?</p> | <p>Proposals should be logically and clearly organized for ease of scoring. We recommend that the proposals be organized as listed in Section IV.</p> |
| C.4 | <p>When can I begin work on my project?</p> | <p>Per Section VI.A of the RFP, EPA anticipates notifying successful applicants that their proposals have been selected to receive a grant by March 31, 2016. This notification, however, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by approximately August 2, 2016. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made.</p> |
| C.5 | <p>Do water quality projects need to benefit underserved communities, or include members of the community in the work?</p> | <p>Proposals submitted under this announcement should meet all of the following program objectives outlined in Section 1.B of the RFP. These Program Objectives include: addressing local water quality issues related to urban runoff pollution; providing additional community benefits; actively engaging underserved communities; and fostering partnerships.</p> <p>Those that do not meet all of these program objectives may not score as highly under the evaluation criteria in Section V.</p> |

| C. Evaluation Issues | | |
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| Question | | |
| Answer | | |
| C.6 | Can an applicant gain past performance points from its partners or subcontractors? | In Section V.A of the RFP, “Past Performance” refers to the applicant’s experience in managing federal or non-federal funding received through assistance agreements. Individuals are not eligible applicants and although they may have specific expertise to contribute to the project, their contributions may be reflected in addressing other criteria such as “Programmatic Capability.” Past Performance of partners or subcontractors will not be considered. |
| C.7 | Is there a regional review panel for each region? | Yes. All eligible proposals will be evaluated by EPA Regional review panel(s), which will be composed of EPA staff and which may also include representatives from other federal agencies. Evaluations will be based on the 100-point scale described in Section V.A above. Proposals will be ranked based on the reviewers’ scores, and the scores and rankings will be provided to the EPA Regional Selection Official(s) for final funding decisions. |

| D. Grants.gov Questions | | |
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| Question | | Answer |
| D.1 | If we have an AOR registered for a previous EPA grant, do we need to re-register at this time? | No, you do not need to re-register with grants.gov. Please see the grants.gov FAQs at www.grants.gov or contact the grants.gov hotline at 1-800-518-4726 for more information. |
| D.2 | Can there be more than one staff member registered & designated with grants.gov as long as only one is designated for this particular EPA small urban waters grant? | Yes, there can be more than one staff member registered with grants.gov, but we recommend only one be the designated AOR for the Urban Waters Small Grants. Please see the grants.gov FAQs at www.grants.gov or contact the grants.gov hotline at 1-800-518-4726 for more information. |
| D.3 | Who is the Authorized Representative who should fill out and sign Box 21 of the SF 424? Should it be the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), as discussed in the RFP? | An officer, employee, or another member of your organization with authority to bind your organization to a contract should sign Box 21. The AOR is the individual your organization designates to register with www.grants.gov and upload the online submission package onto Grants.gov. Assistance for online submission may be provided by contacting the Grants.gov helpline at 1-800-518-4726. |
| D.4 | I am having a difficult time downloading the application package from Grants.gov. | Please call the Grants.gov 24-hour helpline at 1-800-518-4726 or visit http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html for help in downloading the Urban Waters Small Grants application. |

| E. Mapping Questions | | |
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| Question | | Answer |
| E.1 | For the project area map, can the project area be marked on the map image digitally, or is printing, hand-marking, and scanning the map as described in the instructions a required procedure? | Yes, you can mark your map digitally. The map should be produced using the Urban Waters Small Grants Program mapping website, found at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants-mapping . Step-by-step instructions for creating the project area map are available on the mapping website (see URL address above). Applicants should follow the step-by-step instructions to create the project area map, to be included as part of the application package. However, applicants who prefer to mark their maps digitally can capture an image of their project area in the UWSG mapping tool, replace Steps 6-9 with their own method for digitally marking the project area on their map, and convert their map to an appropriate file type, such as PDF or JPEG. |
| E.2 | Is a shapefile of the Eligible Geographic Areas available for mapping project areas. | No. |
| E.3 | Do the boundaries we note on the map have to be exact, or can they be approximate? | The boundaries can be approximate, but need to be completely within one Eligible Geographic Area |
| E.4 | Will there be any information or layers on the UWSG map that indicate which waters are also use as drinking water sources? | No. EPA has no plans to add this information to the map. |
| E.5 | During the webinar, what did you mean when you said to “mark by hand?” | <p>"Mark with hand" refers to Steps 7 and 8 in the instructions for creating your project area map from within the Urban Waters Small Grants Interactive Map.</p> <p>Step (7): Print the document with the map image.</p> <p>Step (8): Clearly mark your project area, using a pen or marker. The markings on your map will be based on the scale of your project.</p> <p>If the project involves a small, discrete area, you could mark the map with a pinpoint or an “X.” If the project involves a large area, you could mark the map with a circled or high-lighted area.</p> <p>Applicants who prefer to mark their maps digitally can refer to FAQ E.1.</p> |
| E.6 | How large should the map be? | The map is included as part of the Narrative Proposal, which should not exceed 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper). |

| E. Mapping Questions | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| E.7 | <p>Do you have a scale for how much you want to see on the map?</p> | <p>Per the mapping instructions, which can be found at http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/uwsg_interactive_mapping_website_instructions.pdf, The scale of the map will be based on the nature of your project. If the project involves only a small area, please zoom the map to that scale.</p> <p>If the project involves a large area, please provide a map that displays that area.</p> |
| E.8 | <p>The interactive map is not showing me the Eligible Geographic Areas. Perhaps it does not work with the software on my computer?</p> | <p>Please try the direct link: http://geoplatform3.epa.gov/UW_SmallGrantsMap/index.html</p> <p>NOTE: It takes a few minutes for the layers to come up on the map. Wait for the map to load before searching.</p> <p>You can type in a specific address or city/state to find eligible areas near you.</p> <p>The mapper works best in Google Chrome and Internet Explorer.</p> |
| E.9 | <p>If we have multiple sites, for example several monitoring stations, should we mark every station with an X or should we draw a big circle around the water bodies we're looking at?</p> | <p>If your project includes multiple sites, the marked map will depend on the scale or your project. We will need to be able to see that all stations and other project activities fall within one eligible geographic area.</p> |

| F. Miscellaneous | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| F.1 | <p>Do I need to submit my Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) with my proposal if I intend to use grant funds for monitoring activities?</p> | <p>You do not need to submit a QAPP at the time you are submitting your proposal. If you do plan on collecting or using environmental data or information as part of your project, please see Sections IV and VIII of the RFP. The proposal should discuss how the applicant will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements, as specified in Section VIII. If your proposal is selected for funding and it is determined that a QAPP is necessary for your project, EPA can work with you directly to identify the necessary QA/QC requirements. If you intend to use grant funds to develop a QAPP for your project, those costs and activities will need to be included in your workplan and budget proposal and you should allow sufficient time and resources for this process in your timeline. Whether or not you intend to develop your QAPP with grant dollars, your QAPP will need to be approved before monitoring activities can begin.</p> |
| F.2 | <p>My question concerns the requirements for QA/QC standards in data acquisition and reporting as specified in the RFP. If the environmental data we propose to collect is only for the purpose of education/training of students in the methods of water quality investigation, do we still need to meet the agency QA/QC protocols and submission requirements, or does that only apply to research quality data?</p> | <p>If you plan on collecting or using environmental data or information as part of your project, please see Sections IV and VIII of the RFP. You do not need to submit a Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) plan at the time you are submitting your proposal; however, the proposal should discuss how the applicant will comply with the QA/QC requirements, as specified in Section VIII.A. To collect data for educational purposes only, the Urban Waters Small Grants program will require you to take QA/QC measures into account. If your proposal is selected for funding EPA will work with you directly to identify the level of QA/QC practices appropriate for the project, and in your case, the QA/QC plan would likely be significantly scaled down from a full QAPP. If you intend to use grant funds to develop a QA/QC plan for your project, those costs and activities will need to be included in your workplan and budget proposal and you should allow sufficient time and resources for this process in your timeline. You do not need the QA/QC plan approved to apply, but if selected, it would have to be approved before data collection can take place.</p> |

| F. Miscellaneous | | |
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| Question | Answer | |
| F.3 | <p>Can you suggest what an appropriate amount of time might be to develop a Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) component, covering water quality sample data?</p> | <p>The time needed to develop a QA/QC plan will vary depending on the project. We ask that you use your research experience and expertise to provide your best estimate as to how much time to allow for this process in your proposal. Please keep in mind that if you are selected EPA can assist successful applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the successful applicant may work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project.</p> |
| F.4 | <p>Why is EPA awarding cooperative agreements and what would an UWSG cooperative agreement look like?</p> | <p>We expect that the Urban Waters cooperative agreements will be awarded at ranges between \$40,000 and \$60,000. We specify that they will be cooperative agreements because we anticipate significant EPA involvement, which will be worked out when final workplans are negotiated. Consistent with the competition policy provisions in the announcement, we cannot comment or advise potential applicants on the specifics of how an award might be structured.</p> |
| F.5 | <p>Are Davis Bacon & Buy America requirements applicable to this grant?</p> | <p>No. Davis Bacon Act and Buy American requirements apply to federally assisted projects only when the statute authorizing grant funding, or another statute such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, imposes the requirements. Neither Section 104 of the Clean Water Act nor any other statute requires that recipients of the Urban Waters Small Grants comply with Davis Bacon or Buy America requirements.</p> |
| F.6 | <p>If a region is announced in a presidential disaster declaration, are they exempt from the Stafford Act?</p> | <p>We presume your question relates to Section 301 of the Stafford Act. That provision allows agencies to waive administrative requirements such as the \$4,000 cost share for the Urban Waters Small Grants when a state or local government in a disaster area requests such a waiver. EPA would consider such a waiver request. The applicant should submit the waiver request as part of the proposal package.</p> |
| F.7 | <p>How should I organize the Proposal Narrative?</p> | <p>There is no specific format that applicants must follow in organizing their Proposal Narrative. Please use your discretion in how to format your proposal so that it best presents your information and can be reviewed against the criteria in the Section V of the RFP. Please make note of the guidelines regarding inclusion of page numbers, font size and margins discussed in Section IV. EPA may not advise you on how to structure your proposal to make it more competitive.</p> |

| F. Miscellaneous | | |
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| Question | | Answer |
| F.8 | Where do we find information to answer Box 19 of the Standard Form (SF) 424, regarding whether the Executive Order (EO) 12372 process applies to our State? | You should confirm with your State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to determine if your application is subject to the review. Each state elects whether or not to review applications for Federal assistance, in order to be aware of what Federal aid is provided to that state. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB)'s guidance regarding the issue can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/ . This webpage also lists the SPOCs for the states that participate in the review. The webpage also states that if the state is not listed, then they do not participate, and option “C) Program is not covered by E.O. 12372” should be checked for Box 19 of the SF 424. |
| F.9 | In Box 13 of the SF 424, what is the Competition Identification Number and Title? | There is no Competition Identification Number and Title for this announcement; please leave it blank. |
| F.10 | Will you need EPA-experienced peer reviewers for this program? | No, EPA will not use nonfederal peer reviewers for this review and selection process. Projects may be reviewed by EPA Headquarters and EPA Regional review panel(s), which may include representatives from other federal agencies. Refer to Section V for a full description of the review and selection process. |
| F.11 | When is the urban water small grants information session webinar? | Oct 22, 2015 at 2pm EST. EPA will attempt to answer any appropriate questions in this public forum. Registration information for the Information Session can be found at http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants . |
| F.12 | Will the webinar materials be made available after the session? | The webinar slides are now available on our website (http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants). The content of this “Questions and Answers Document” has been updated with questions submitted during the webinar and EPA responses. Due to technical difficulties, EPA is unable to post a recording of the webinar. |
| F.13 | Do you have examples of past successful proposals? | EPA does not have examples of previous successful proposals, but you may visit these websites to view past Urban Waters Small Grants recipients: http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/20112012-grant-recipients and http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/20132014-grant-recipients . |
| F.14 | Do we need to provide a similar table as one given in Appendix A? | No, this table is only meant to offer potential applicants project examples, and example project outputs and outcomes. |

| F. Miscellaneous | | |
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| | Question | Answer |
| F.15 | Should we plan for more than one person to attend the required in-person training? | At least one representative from the recipient organization should plan to attend. It is the recipient organization's decision to have more than one person from their organization attend the workshop. |
| F.16 | What type of information will be included in the "final applications" that is not being requested as a part of this RFP? | Additional forms related to funding will be required and clarifications on proposal narratives will also be requested. Applicants whose proposals have been recommended for an award will be asked for more detail than was allowed within the proposal page limits. Please see Section VI of the RFP for more information on what the final application package may include. |
| F.17 | How much time will there be between notification of the application status and submitting the final application, if selected for an award? | This will be negotiated by the EPA Project Officer after a proposal is deemed successful. |
| F.18 | It is difficult to tell from grants.gov what was modified but I did get a notice that this had been modified. Can you tell me what was modified? | We made a minor modification. Under Section III.C. of the RFP, we added clarifying threshold language: "Applicants must submit projects that are focused on one of the two project types listed in Section I.B. Proposals that address more than one project type or do not address any project type will not be reviewed." |
| F.19 | How many grants will be awarded per Region? | EPA estimates that 2-3 awards will be made in each Region. Please visit the Agency's website at http://www2.epa.gov/aboutepa#pane-4 for a listing of EPA Regional offices and the states served by each of the 10 Regions. |
| F.20 | Is a scoring matrix available? | No. However, you can glean the points available for each section by reviewing Section V.A (Selection Criteria) |
| F.21 | Where and where will the 2017 River Rally event be held? | River Rally 2017 is anticipated to be held in the Great Lakes region and to take place over two days (Friday and Saturday) in the May/June 2017 timeframe. |