

**Dated: April 28, 2020**  
**Modified: June 19, 2020**

**U.S. EPA GREAT LAKES NATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICE**  
**Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program**  
**2020 Request for Applications**

**Federal Agency Name:** Environmental Protection Agency  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program  
**Announcement Type:** Request for Applications  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-R5-GL2020-SSP  
**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 66.469

**INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

This Request for Applications (RFA) solicits applications from eligible entities for a cooperative agreement to be awarded pursuant to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative [Action Plan III](#). Applications are requested for a project to complete chemical analysis in support of the Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program (GLSSP).

**Funding/Awards:** Under this competition, approximately \$3 million may be awarded for one cooperative agreement over a five-year period, consisting of incremental funding of about \$600,000 per year. Proposed projects **must** be limited to the specified project duration of five years. All incrementally funded awards will be subject to the availability of funding, future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations.

The statutory authority of the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) (“GLRI” or “Initiative”) to award cooperative agreements is contained in the Clean Water Act, Section 118(c)(7), as amended by Public Law 114-322. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has authority to award grants and cooperative agreements for planning, research, monitoring, outreach and implementation projects in furtherance of the GLRI and the [Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement](#). Governmental entities, including state agencies, interstate agencies, Indian tribes, local governments, institutions of higher learning (*i.e.*, colleges and universities), and non-profit organizations (as defined in 2 CFR Part 200) are eligible to apply for funding under this RFA. Individuals, foreign organizations and governments, nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying, and “for-profit” organizations are not eligible.

**Important Dates:**

- June 27, 2020 – Applications must be received by EPA via Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). There are limited exceptions to submission via Grants.gov. See Section IV for further submission information.
- July (tentative) – EPA will notify finalist.
- August (tentative) – EPA will make official award.

**Other Application Information:** For your convenience, an [RFA web page](#) has been created where you will find information relating to the RFA process as well as a link to frequently asked questions (FAQs). We encourage all applicants to [register with us and sign up for our mailing list](#). Further submittal information is described in Section IV.

**U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative  
Request for Applications: EPA-R5-GL2020-SSP**

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**U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative  
Request for Applications: EPA-R5-GL2020-SSP**

**I. APPLICATION INFORMATION**

**Background, Authority, and Funded Activities:**

The [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) (“GLRI” or “Initiative”) builds on the prior efforts of federal, state, and local agencies; Indian tribes; businesses; public interest groups; interested citizens; and others to develop a collaborative and comprehensive approach to restoring the Great Lakes.

This RFA is expected to result in the award of one cooperative agreement, as appropriate (hereafter collectively referred to as “grant”), to help implement the GLRI. Authorization for GLRI funding is contained in the Clean Water Act, Section 118(c)(7), as amended by Public Law 114-322.

EPA has authority to award cooperative agreements for planning, research, monitoring, outreach and implementation projects in furtherance of GLRI and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA). The statutory authority to act to implement the U.S. responsibilities under GLWQA<sup>1</sup> and the GLRI is contained in the Clean Water Act, Section 118(c)(7), as amended by Public Law 114-322. Funded activities must advance protection and restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem in support of: (i) the GLRI [Action Plan III](#) and (ii) EPA’s Strategic Plan. Projects must also either: (i) protect, enhance, and/or restore the Great Lakes and its connecting river systems (St. Marys River, St. Clair River including Lake St. Clair, Detroit River, Niagara River, and St. Lawrence River at the international boundary or upstream from the point at which this river becomes the international boundary between Canada and the United States); or (ii) protect Great Lakes ecosystem health, including human health. Applications for other activities will be rejected.

The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA’s FY 2018-22 [Strategic Plan](#). Awards made under this announcement will support the Plan’s Goal 1: A Cleaner, Healthier Environment, Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water. All applications must be for projects that support the goals and objectives identified above.

For projects with international aspects, the above statutes are supplemented, as appropriate, by the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 102(2)(F).

This RFA solicits applications from eligible entities for a cooperative agreement to be awarded pursuant to the statutory authorities referenced above and the GLRI [Action Plan III](#). Up to \$3

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<sup>1</sup> The principal goal of GLWQA is the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Great Lakes ecosystem.

million may be awarded under this RFA over an approximately five-year and three-month period, consisting of incremental funding of about \$600,000 per year, contingent on the quality of applications received, funding availability, future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. Funding each year is not guaranteed. The application should include an annualized budget and budget detail narrative for the project, and a detailed workplan covering each year of the project.

All projects will be evaluated as described in Section V.

### **Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs):**

EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces. At the same time, EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation by including members of communities which may have not previously participated in such dialogues to participate in EPA programs. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered MSIs:

- A. [Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061).
- B. [Tribal Colleges and Universities](#), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)).
- C. [Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)).
- D. [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions](#), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(a)(2)); and
- E. [Predominantly Black Institutions](#), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6).

### **Subawardees and/or Contractors:**

If applicants name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s), including individual consultants, in your application as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section III regarding "Coalitions" and to the "Contracts and Subawards" provisions listed [here](#) and incorporated by reference in Section IV.

**Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program Background, Goals, and Objectives:** The Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program (GLSSP) includes open-lake based collection of sediment cores and surficial sediment grab or core samples in deep depositional zones in all five Lakes; age-dating of cores, and analyses for legacy chemicals and chemicals of emerging concern. Recipients of any awards under this program are expected to work closely with EPA's

Great Lakes Nation Program Office (GLNPO) and other GLNPO chemical surveillance monitoring program (*e.g.*, Integrated Atmospheric Deposition Network and Great Lakes Fish Monitoring and Surveillance Program) grantees, and the United States Geological Survey (USGS). In proposals, applicants should discuss how their work will further the development of the body of knowledge related to organic persistent bioaccumulative toxic (PBT) chemicals in the Great Lakes. This may include use of data to further study sources, fate, and transport of PBTs to the Great Lakes region, scientific journal publications, and further education of graduate students and post-doctoral candidates in the Great Lakes ecosystem research.

EPA expects to provide up to approximately \$3 million for one cooperative agreement over a five-year period, consisting of incremental funding of about \$600,000 per year, to support the GLSSP.

**Program Activities:** Applicants are expected to conduct activities (listed below) in support of the above goals and objectives through the GLSSP and may also include other activities associated with conducting new and emerging chemical surveillance and special research. The following provides a brief description of the expected activities:

1. *Sample Collection and Analysis:*

- a. *Sample Collection and Field Activities* – Applicants are expected to participate in sample collection aboard the [R/V Lake Guardian](#). It is expected that the recipient of this cooperative agreement will propose open lake depositional zones for sampling within each of the five Great Lakes within their application. It is also expected that the recipient will work collaboratively with EPA and USGS on sampling design and collection methods for sediment cores and grabs. One lake will be sampled per year, to coincide with and the [Cooperative Science and Monitoring Initiative \(CSMI\)<sup>2</sup>](#) five-year cycle beginning with Lake Michigan in the 2020 field year (Table 1). Lake Michigan sampling efforts will take place in September 2020. Applicants should expect to collect roughly two to three cores per lake (one in each basin for each lake) and roughly 25 surficial sediment grabs or cores per lake. These sample numbers are provisional and will be discussed in further detail with a selected applicant as field seasons approach.
- b. *Sample Analysis* – Applicants are expected to analyze for all required contaminants (Table 2) in sediment samples. Physical characteristics of sediment must also be collected (*i.e.*, bulk density, percent moisture, grain size, etc).

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<sup>2</sup> The Cooperative Science and Monitoring Initiative (CSMI) is a joint United States and Canadian effort to provide environmental managers with needed information on each Great Lake. The lakes are visited one per year in a five-year rotation. In 2020, CSMI will be focused on Lake Michigan. In subsequent years (2021-2024), CSMI will focus on Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, and Lake Erie, respectively.

Applicants must describe their proposed analysis methods and Minimum Detection Levels (MDL) of all proposed methods. As analysis of mercury in sediment cores and surficial sediment grabs or cores will be conducted by USGS; consequently, a proposed method and MDL for mercury is not required in this application. Applicants are not expected to cover financial costs of USGS mercury analysis. Applicants may also propose new contaminants of interest for analysis that are not included in Table 2. If proposed, applicants should discuss how these activities contribute to the goals and objectives of the GLRI and the GLWQA.

2. *Data Management, Interpretation, Statistical Analysis and Reporting* – Applicants are expected to manage data generated through sample collection and analysis and submit it to EPA in electronic format. Applicants are expected to interpret data through statistical analysis and report their findings to EPA. Specific details on formatting types, requirements, and data submission timelines will be agreed upon with the selected applicant in a statement of work. Any data generated pursuant to this cooperative agreement, if awarded, will be provided to EPA and made available to applicable federal and state agencies, and tribal organizations managing chemical contaminant surveillance programs. Semiannual progress summaries and a final report at the end of the five-year cycle are also required. A brief summary of the results may be requested for inclusion in up to two GLWQA State of the Great Lakes Reports.
3. *Quality Assurance and Quality Control* – Applicants are required to develop, implement and maintain a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

Table 1. Great Lakes sampling field years

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Sampling Lake</b> |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2020        | Michigan             |
| 2021        | Superior             |
| 2022        | Huron                |
| 2023        | Ontario              |
| 2024        | Erie                 |

Table 2. Sediment sample required analyte list

| <b>Analyte</b>                                       |
|--|
| PCBs   |
| PCDDs  |
| PCDFs  |
| PCNs   |
| PCDEs  |
| PBDEs  |
| Non-PBDE brominated flame retardants                 |
| Non-DP chlorinated flame retardants                  |
| Organochlorine pesticides                            |
| Triazine herbicides                                  |
| Synthetic musk compounds                             |
| PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA,<br>PFBA, PFBS, PFCA* |
| Polyhalogenated carbazoles                           |
| PAHs   |
| Lead   |
| Mercury**  |

\*Priority Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are of high interest as stated in EPA’s PFAS Action Plan(2019). Specific priority PFAS compounds may be discussed in further detail with a selected applicant.

\*\*Mercury analysis will be conducted by USGS. This may include but is not limited to methyl mercury and isotopic mercury concentrations.



**Required Activities:**

To be eligible under this request, applicants **must** demonstrate how they will:

- Analyze sediment cores and surficial sediment grabs or cores from proposed sampling sites. A Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) must be approved by the GLNPO Quality Assurance Manager prior to collection and analysis of any samples. The timing of the 2020 field season may necessitate that the grantee develop the QAPP after selection but prior to award and funding availability. Pre-award costs related to QAPP development may be considered as eligible costs under the grant and should be included in the budget narrative, but reimbursement is not guaranteed. See EPA's [QAPP guidance](#);
- Perform chemical analyses to retain comparability and continuity with historical GLSSP data;
- Submit quality-assured analytical results to EPA within 10 months of collection of samples (*i.e.*, submit data for all 2020 samples collected in September 2020 to the EPA GLSSP Technical Lead by June 2021);
- Communicate and collaborate with the EPA GLSSP Technical Lead to revise and define the contaminants to monitor according to federal, state and tribal priorities.

**Outputs and Outcomes:** For purposes of this RFA:

- The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable over the term of the cooperative agreement funding period.
- The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will be achieved by carrying out an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, must be quantitative, and may not necessarily be achievable within a cooperative agreement funding period.

**Outputs must** include one or more of the following and applicant **must** link proposed outputs to the GLRI [Action Plan III](#) Measures of Progress or goals and objectives:

- A quantification of persistent bioaccumulative toxic chemicals in Great Lakes sediment samples, with attention to continuity and consistency of those measurements, such that trend data are not biased by changes in program operations or personnel;
- An evaluation of the spatial and temporal trends of persistent toxic chemicals in Great Lakes sediments;
- The discovery of new emerging chemical threats to the Great Lakes;
- Sample collection, sample analysis, data management, data interpretation, statistical analysis, and report writing;
- Collaboration with other federal (U.S. and Canada), state, provincial and tribal contaminant monitoring programs to develop Great Lakes datasets of legacy

- contaminants, contaminants of mutual concern, and emerging chemicals of concern;
- Development of Great Lakes scientists through the education of graduate and undergraduate students in Great Lakes ecosystem science;
- Dissemination of results via peer-reviewed journal articles, presentations, and other media including EPA Technical Program Reports.

**Applicants must also demonstrate how their proposed project will achieve one or more of the following outcomes:**

- Increased understanding of persistent bioaccumulative toxic (PBT) chemical trends in Great Lakes sediment;
- Increased understanding of how concentrations and trends of PBTs in Great Lakes sediment relate to concentrations and trends of PBTs in other media such as air, water, biota, and sediment;
- Increased understanding of the effects of PBTs on the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

**Amounts, Targets, and Number of Projects:** Approximately \$3 million in EPA funding is expected to be awarded under this RFA for one cooperative agreement over an approximately 5-year period, consisting of incremental funding of approximately \$600,000 per year. Awarding and funding of the cooperative agreement is contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received and other applicable considerations. The anticipated total amount and annual increments are estimates only and are being provided solely for application preparation purposes. Applications requesting funding above the anticipated total amount will not be considered.

The actual total and incremental award amount may differ from what is estimated for many reasons, including funding availability. In addition, EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award under this announcement or make an award for less than expected.

**Anticipated Project Start and End Dates:** This RFA instructs applicants to submit certifications and other documentation required for a full and complete funding package so that their projects could, if selected, proceed expeditiously. Applications should specify a start date on or around August 15, 2020 and **must** specify an end date no later than September 30, 2025.

**Additional Awards:** EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes

available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

**Funding Type:** The successful applicant will be issued a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA expects to have substantial involvement in this project in the form of technical assistance, network guidance, use of the R/V *Lake Guardian* as appropriate, provision of historic data, evaluation of project progress, and quantification and reporting of results. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of “substantial involvement” as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient’s performance; collaboration during the performance of the agreed upon work; review of proposed procurements in accordance with; 2 CFR § 200.317 and 2 CFR §§ 200.318 and 1500.9; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

**Future Funding:** Selection or award of funding under this RFA is not a guarantee of future funding.

**Partial Funding:** In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and, therefore, maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

### III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

**Applicant Eligibility (CFDA 66.469):** Qualified non-federal entities eligible to apply for grants include non-federal governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, and institutions. This includes state agencies; any agency or instrumentality of local government; interstate agencies; federally-recognized tribes and tribal organizations; colleges and universities; non-profit organizations; and other public or non-profit private agencies, institutions, and organizations.

**Nonprofit Definition:** Non-profit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization which: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations. Non-profit 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 applicants. "For profit" organizations, federal agencies, and individuals are not eligible applicants.

Note that 2 CFR Part 200 specifically excludes the following types of organizations from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation: (i) institutions of higher education; and (ii) state, local and federally recognized Indian tribal governments. While not considered to be a non-profit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR Part 200, Institutions of Higher Education and state, local and federally recognized Indian tribal governments are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA.

**Encouraging Minority Serving Institutions To Compete:** Eligible Minority Serving Institutions, as described in Section I, are strongly encouraged to apply for funding under this competition.

EPA recognizes that scientific, technical, engineering and mathematical (STEM) competence is essential to the Nation's future well-being in terms of national security and competitive economic advantage. For instance, the health and vitality of the economy is predicated, in part, on the availability of an adequate supply of scientists, technicians, engineers and mathematicians, to develop innovative technologies and solutions. In other words, this country must engage all available minds to address the challenges it faces. Minorities, women, and persons with disabilities historically have been under-represented in the STEM fields. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants including, women, minorities, and persons with disabilities to apply.

**Coalitions:** Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subawardees of the recipient. Subawards and subgrants must be consistent with the definitions of those terms in 2 C.F.R. § 200.92. The recipient that administers the grant will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 C.F.R. § 200.331(d), subrecipients or subgrantees are accountable to the recipient or grantee for proper use of EPA funding.

Coalitions may not include for-profit organizations that will provide services or products to the successful applicant. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards. For-profit organizations are eligible to receive contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance **must** be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. (Please see 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable.) For additional information, please review the [Federal Register](#).

**Match or Cost-Share:** There is no cost-sharing or matching requirement as a condition of eligibility under this RFA.

**Threshold Eligibility Criteria:** These are requirements that if not met by the applicant by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications for eligible activities from eligible entities that meet these criteria by the time of application submission will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this RFA. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified by email within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applications **must** substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this RFA or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is stated for the Narrative Proposal in Section IV, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
2. In addition, applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.
3. Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Brian Lenell ([lenell.brian@epa.gov](mailto:lenell.brian@epa.gov)) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.
4. Unless specifically excluded under this RFA, assistance is available to eligible applicants for planning, research, monitoring, outreach, and implementation of the [GLRI](#) and [GLWQA](#). Proposed projects must also either: (i) protect, enhance, and/or restore the Great Lakes and the connecting river systems of St. Marys River, St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, Detroit River, Niagara River, and St. Lawrence River at the international boundary or upstream from the point at which this river becomes the international boundary between Canada and the United States; or (ii) protect Great Lakes ecosystem health, including human health. Applications for other activities will be rejected.
5. Applications seeking funding in excess of \$3 million over 5 years will be rejected. In addition, an application for a multi-phase project will be treated as a request for the full amount for all phases. If that combined amount exceeds the specified maximum, the application will be rejected.
6. Applications for projects lasting beyond the maximum end date of September 30, 2025 will be rejected.

**Ineligible Activities:** If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, including, but not limited to, those listed above, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

Applicants should contact the applicable individual listed in Section VII with any questions about the threshold eligibility requirements.

#### **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

##### **A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures:**

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this announcement in Appendix I. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact [OGDWaivers@epa.gov](mailto:OGDWaivers@epa.gov) or the address listed below in writing (*e.g.*, by hard copy or email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

**Mailing Address:**

OGD Waivers  
c/o Jessica Durand  
USEPA Headquarters  
William Jefferson Clinton Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.  
Mail Code: 3903R  
Washington, DC 20460

**Courier Address:**

OGD Waivers  
c/o Jessica Durand  
Ronald Reagan Building  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Rm # 51278  
Washington, DC 20004

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

1. Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
2. Organization Name and DUNS
3. Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
4. Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of: 1) limited internet access; or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through Grants.gov.

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request. All other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to

submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding proposal content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (*e.g.*, if the exception was approved on March 1, 2019, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2019). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2018 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2019, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2019.

**NOTE:** The process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

## **B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions (see Appendix I)**

Your organization's authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **June 27, 2020, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET)**.

## **C. Content of Application Submission**

The application package **must** include all of the following materials:

### **1. Grant Application Forms.** Please complete the forms as appropriate.

- a.** Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.
- b.** Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
- c.** EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants Requesting Federal Financial Assistance*
- d.** EPA Form 5700-54 Key Contacts Form
- e.** Project Narrative Attachment Form (See Section IV.C.2. below for additional information)



f. Other Attachment Form, if applicable (See Section IV.C.3. below for additional information)

**2. Narrative Proposal:** Narrative Proposals (including the Summary Information Page, Workplan, Detailed Budget Narrative; Maps, Charts and Figures; and Meeting/Conference/Workshop Information) must be no more than thirty single-spaced pages in length and include the items below in the requested order. Excess pages will not be reviewed. Maps, charts, pictures, and other figures must be included in the Narrative Proposal file. They may be included within the body of the workplan or as an appendix. In either case, inclusion of those items will be counted against the page limit. Maps, charts, pictures, and other figures that are submitted as a separate attachment will not be reviewed.

Each Narrative Proposal must be formatted for 8½” x 11” paper and should use no smaller than an 11-point Times New Roman font with 1” margins. Do not use a “double column” (a.k.a. newspaper) format. Readability is of paramount importance. Do not include more than one application in any file. Please do not zip the file or use a .zip extension for your file because it will not be accepted.

Applicants are encouraged to use sampling and analytical methods that are comparable to the analytical methods and sampling methods previously used by the GLSSP to ensure comparability and continuity in data sets; however, development and optimization of methods are encouraged. Method development by the Principal Investigator may be necessary as the analyte list is modified. Prior to the receipt or analysis of any environmental samples, the award recipient will need to demonstrate comparability with existing data sets collected under this program through the analysis of a minimum of 10 check samples. These data will be received and evaluated by the EPA GLNPO Technical Lead prior to analysis of actual environmental samples. At the discretion of the EPA Project Officer, the Principal Investigator may need to conduct a pre-award performance evaluation through the analysis of a standard reference sample to be provided by the EPA Technical Lead. Applicants are encouraged to provide suggestions for changes and/or improvements to the GLSSP collections; however, continuity between the historical GLSSP and future data is required. Pre-award costs related to performance evaluations may be considered as eligible costs under the grant and should be included in the budget narrative, but reimbursement is not guaranteed.

**1. Summary Information Page (should not exceed one page):**

**Funding Opportunity Number.** The RFA number is EPA-R5-GL2020-SSP.

**A. Project Title.** Please limit to 60 characters. EPA reserves the right to change the project title for its administrative convenience.

**B. Applicant Information.** Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, and e-mail address. *Do not include private information.*

- C. **Proposed Funding Request.** The total dollar amount requested from EPA. Make sure it is within the limits specified or your application will be rejected.
  - D. **Project Duration.** Provide beginning and ending dates. See “Anticipated Start and End Dates” in Section II.
  - E. **Brief Project Description.** Summarize the proposed project in 100 words or less in a clear and succinct manner using PLAIN LANGUAGE, including expected outputs, outcomes and environmental benefits resulting from implementation of the project. Include environmental KEY TERMS that could be used as search terms (*e.g.*, water quality, toxins, mercury, *etc.*). Do not use acronyms. Should the proposal be selected, and a grant awarded, this description may be posted to the EPA Web. EPA reserves the right to make unilateral changes to conform to posting requirements. Examples can be found [here](#).
  - F. **Project Location.** Specify a single, representative project location within the Great Lakes basin, including 8- or 12-digit HUC code available [here](#), and latitude and longitude specifying decimal degrees available [here](#), **even if the work will be done at multiple locations or by applicants who are located outside the Great Lakes basin. Please include the reason for the location you identify if that is not self-evident.**
2. **Work Plan.** The Work Plan for each proposed project **must** explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-III of this RFA (including the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III) and **must** address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V. Each Work Plan should be organized in the order and with the headings and information requested below. Details and associated point values for each section of the workplan are described in RFA Section V (Application Review) below.
- A. Project Summary and Approach
  - B. Sample Collection and Analysis:
    - i. *Sample Collection and Field Activities* – Applicants are expected to participate in sample collection aboard the [R/V Lake Guardian](#). It is expected that the recipient of this cooperative agreement will propose open lake depositional zones for sampling within each of the five Great Lakes within their application. It is also expected that the recipient will work collaboratively with EPA and USGS on sampling design and collection methods for sediment cores and grabs. One lake will be sampled per year, to coincide with and the [Cooperative Science and Monitoring Initiative \(CSMI\)](#) five-year cycle beginning

with Lake Michigan in the 2020 field year (Table 1). Lake Michigan sampling efforts will take place in September 2020. Applicants should expect to collect roughly two to three cores per lake (one in each basin for each lake) and roughly 25 surficial sediment grabs or cores per lake. These sample numbers are provisional and will be discussed in further detail with a selected applicant as field seasons approach.

- ii. *Sample Analysis* – Applicants are expected to analyze for all required contaminants (Table 2) in sediment samples. Physical characteristics of sediment must also be collected (*i.e.*, bulk density, percent moisture, grain size, etc). Applicants must describe their proposed analysis methods and the Minimum Detection Levels (MDL) of all proposed analysis methods. As analysis of mercury in sediment cores and surficial sediment grabs or cores will be conducted by USGS; consequently, a proposed method and MDL for mercury is not required in this application. Applicants are not expected to cover financial costs of USGS mercury analysis. Applicants may also propose new contaminants of interest for analysis that are not included in Table 2. If proposed, applicants should discuss how these activities contribute to the goals and objectives of the GLRI and the GLWQA.

C. *Data Management, Interpretation, Statistical Analysis and Reporting* – Applicants are expected to manage data generated through sample collection and analysis and submit to EPA. Applicants are expected to interpret data through statistical analysis and report findings to EPA. Specific details on formatting requirements and data submission timelines will be agreed upon with the selected applicant in a statement of work. Any data generated pursuant to this cooperative agreement, if awarded, will be provided to EPA and made available to applicable federal and state agencies, and tribal organizations managing chemical contaminant surveillance programs. Semiannual progress summaries and a final report at the end of the five-year cycle are also required. A brief summary of the results may be requested for inclusion in up to two GLWQA State of the Great Lakes Reports.

D. *Quality Assurance and Quality Control* – Applicants are required to develop, implement and maintain a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

- 3. Results: Outputs and Outcomes:** Specify the estimated quantitative and qualitative expected results (outputs and outcomes) of the proposed project including but not limited to those specifically identified in Section I, as well as the GLRI Action Plan goal of reporting on GLRI progress and Great Lakes ecosystem health and the GLRI Action Plan III commitment to issue GLWQA triennial State of the Lakes reports, and the approach and measurements that will be used to track and measure progress towards achieving the applicable outputs and outcomes. Demonstrate how the project will achieve the desired results. Provide a timetable or schedule with target dates projected for major tasks, accomplishments and deliverables.

Include a statement of the project's relevance to the Great Lakes, particularly how the results will address the needs and priorities of the GLRI [Action Plan III](#) and/or the [GLWQA](#).

- 4. Collaboration:** Describe the type of any collaboration/support proposed, how you will ensure that it will materialize during project performance, and what role it will play in the overall project. Any letters demonstrating evidence of collaboration and support from the public or private sector should be attached as part of Section IV, Application Materials, item 11. Describe how you will coordinate activities of the project with related or complementary projects and studies. IF YOU INTEND TO PROVIDE EPA FUNDS TO ANY COLLABORATING ORGANIZATION, PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW PROVISIONS ON "CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS" [HERE](#).
- 5. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:** Submit a list (of no more than five) federally-funded assistance agreements<sup>3</sup> (including but not limited to previous GLRI awards from EPA or other federal sources) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe: (1) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and (2) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not); and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. For all EPA grants listed, include the EPA Grant Number. In evaluating applicants under these factors 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 federal agency grantors (*e.g.*, to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).

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<sup>3</sup> Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements, but not federal or other contracts.

*NOTE:* If you or your institution have previously received a GLRI award or awards, list the award(s) and provide the information described above. In addition, for EPA GLRI awards received from 2015 to 2019, please provide an explanation of and documentation supporting the quarterly rate of expenditure on those prior GLRI awards up through the date of the applicant's submission under this solicitation.

If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). *If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.*

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Applicants should also demonstrate expertise in low-level persistent toxic chemical measurements using the methods proposed in their application. Demonstrated expertise should include publications in the literature relevant to the Great Lakes, environmental science, chemistry, and technology. Provide information on your organizational experience and your plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. This information should be supported by resumes or curricula vitae for key staff as defined in document 8 of Section IV.

- 6. Education/Outreach:** Applicants should describe how they intend to educate and train undergraduate and graduate students in Great Lakes environmental chemistry as part of the project.

Applicants should demonstrate that the project will effectively disseminate data and reports for use by federal, state and tribal environmental managers, academia and/or other interested stakeholders. The applicant must also specify plans for timely information transfer, including annual interpretive reports, presentations at meetings and conferences, journal articles, textbooks, Internet postings, and peer-reviewed publications.

Applicants should describe how project results will be disseminated to interested stakeholders; your demonstrated track record of outreach to citizens on environmental issues; and the potential of the project for transferability and applicability to other places in accordance with the application review criteria in Section V.

7. **Detailed Budget Narrative:** Applicants should clearly explain how EPA funds and any voluntary cost-shares will be used. For guidance, see Appendix 1. Use this section to provide a narrative description of the budget found in the SF-424A. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Applicants should use whole dollar amounts. Applicants should include costs for quality system documentation (*i.e.*, quality assurance project plans or quality management plans) and environmental and regulatory compliance (*e.g.*, costs for assisting EPA with compliance by conducting surveys and analysis to identify whether protected resources are in the project location and, if so, whether there will be any effects; costs associated with potential mitigation measures; etc.). Applicants that do not include such costs may have to fund these and other overlooked costs out of their own funds.

As part of the detailed budget narrative, applicants should explain their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. Please include an explanation of expenditure projections, with quarterly fiscal projections and milestones, for the life of the grant.

8. **Other Attachments:** The additional attachments listed in Section IV are not part of the Narrative Proposal and are not included in the 30-page limit; however, forms 7 and 8 as described in Appendix I may, as appropriate, be considered during evaluations. For additional information about each of these attachments, see the descriptions contained in Appendix I.

**D. Submission Date and Times: The closing date and time for submission of applications is June 27, 2020, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET). Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.**

**E. Notification:** See Section VII for contact information. All applicants will be contacted following selections to tell them whether they have been selected. Selection information will also be posted to the [GLSSP RFA page](#).

**F. Subawardees and/or Contractors:** If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s), including individual consultants, in your application as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section III regarding "Coalitions" and to the "Contracts and Subawards" provisions [here](#).

**G. Information provided to EPA:** Before applying for an award, applicants should be aware that under Public Law No. 105-277, data produced under an award, and any information provided to EPA, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

**H. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into RFA:** [Additional provisions](#) that apply to this RFA and/or awards made under this RFA, including but not limited to those related

to confidential business information, application assistance and communications, management fees, contracts and subawards under grants, and duplicate funding can be found [here](#).

These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants **must** review them when preparing proposals for this RFA. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this RFA to obtain the provisions.

## V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

### A. Application Review:

Applications meeting the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III will be evaluated based on the criteria set forth below. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their Narrative Proposal and application submission. Each submittal will be rated under a point system, with a total of 100 points possible.

Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the work proposed will address the **criteria specifically detailed in items 1 – 8 below**; the failure to provide applicable information in the application may affect the score assigned for a criterion.

#### 1. Monitoring Program – Technical Ability and Sample Analysis (20 points)

Describe with specificity the process by which the applicant will collect and analyze all analytes<sup>4</sup> in samples collected in support of the GLSSP.

##### a) Sample Collection and Field Activities (10 points)

Propose station map and rationale justifying sampling locations for cores and surficial sediment samples. Applicants are expected to coordinate with EPA to schedule sample collection work as described in Section IV. Applicants must demonstrate their ability to participate in sample collection activities aboard the R/V *Lake Guardian*.

##### b) Sample Analyses (10 points)

Applicants are expected to demonstrate how they will undertake monitoring activities for the GLSSP. Applicants are expected to analyze all collected samples for a suite (see Table 2) of persistent bioaccumulative toxic (PBT) chemicals. Applicants must detail the analytical methodology they will employ to PBT chemicals in sediment samples. Applicants are expected to identify the analytical equipment they intend to use (or purchase) to analyze samples. Description of ability to conduct low level contaminant analysis should be included in this section. Applicants are also expected to demonstrate

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<sup>4</sup>Mercury analysis will be conducted by USGS. Mercury analysis capabilities will not be factored into this scoring criteria.

how they will store and archive sample extracts.

If additional research or monitoring activities are proposed, applicants are expected to discuss how they support the GLSSP. Research activities are not required for a successful application; however, applicants may score higher in the Project Summary and Approach criteria to the extent they demonstrate an appropriate rationale and workplan for the proposed additional research. Applicants should discuss how these activities contribute to the goals and objectives of the GLRI and the GLWQA.

## **2. Data management, Interpretation, Statistical analysis, and Report writing (10 points)**

With large quantities of data being generated, a comprehensive and efficient data management system is necessary. Applicants must demonstrate how they will submit quality-assured analytical results within 10 months (or other EPA-approved timeframe) of receipt of samples in their laboratory (*i.e.*, submit data on all 2020 samples collected in September 2020 by June 2021). Applicants are expected to submit data to the EPA GLSSP Technical Lead in a format that is compatible with the Great Lakes Environmental Database (GLENDa). Data will be made publicly available through GLENDa according to the data release policy.

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) directs the United States and Canada to “establish and maintain comprehensive, science-based ecosystem indicators to assess the state of the Great Lakes, to anticipate emerging threats and to measure progress...” GLWQA also directs the United States and Canada to identify and assess “the occurrence, sources, transport and impact of chemicals of mutual concern, including spatial and temporal trends in the atmosphere, in aquatic biota, wildlife, water and sediments.” Applicants are expected to demonstrate how they will collaborate with the EPA GLSSP Technical Lead to report on the status and trends of PBT chemicals within the sediment of the Great Lakes.

A key project component is to ensure that the surveillance information generated is made available to the Great Lakes community in a wide variety of formats, including reports, scientific journal articles and internet products. It is also important that any new information generated be placed into a historical perspective so that determinations may be made of how chemical concentrations and loads are changing over time and place. EPA can provide historical GLSSP data for these purposes. Applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which their proposed work will further the development of the body of knowledge related to PBT chemicals in Great Lakes sediment. The advancement of scientific knowledge may include the use of ancillary data to identify PBT sources; publishing project results in scientific journals; collaboration with other long-term contaminant monitoring programs, and furthering the education of undergraduate, graduate students and post-doctoral candidates in the Great Lakes ecosystem research.

## **3. Quality Assurance / Quality Control (10 points)**



Applicants will be evaluated on how well they demonstrate how they will develop and implement a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). The QAPP details project organization and responsibility, sampling procedures, sample custody, analytical procedures, data reduction, validation, internal quality control checks and preventative maintenance. Applicants should discuss their plans for ensuring the continuity and consistency of GLSSP measurements through reproducible quality assurance and quality control samples (*e.g.*, laboratory duplicates, laboratory blanks, and matrix spikes).

#### **4. Results: Outputs and Outcomes (15 points)**

##### **a) Outputs (10 points)**

Specify your approach for demonstrating how you will achieve: 1) the expected and proposed outputs for the project including but not limited to those specifically identified in Section I; 2) any other applicable objectives or measures from the GLRI Action Plan III; and identify how the approach and measurements that will be used to track and measure progress towards achieving the applicable outputs. Demonstrate how the project will achieve the desired results.

##### **b) Outcomes (5 points)**

Specify the estimated outcomes of the proposed project and how those outcomes factor into the goals of the GLRI Action Plan III, the 2012 GLWQA, and EPA's goal of protecting human health and the environment. Please identify how the project outcomes can be assessed and tracked. Demonstrate how the project will achieve the desired results.

#### **5. Collaboration and Plans (5 points)**

Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate that they will work in partnership with appropriate partners to effectively and efficiently implement the proposed project. Applicants may score higher on this criterion to the extent they demonstrate in their Narrative Proposal how the project will effectively disseminate data and reports for use by state, tribal, and local environmental managers and academia.

Applicants should list the proposed partners that will be involved in the project and any related projects and studies, and what each of the partners' roles will be in the project's staffing, funding, design and implementation. Describe the type of collaboration and support proposed, how you will ensure that it will materialize during project performance, and what role it will play in the overall project. (Any letters demonstrating evidence of collaboration and support from the public or private sector should be attached as part of the Application Materials.) Describe how you will coordinate activities of the project with related or complementary projects and studies. If you intend to provide EPA funds to any collaborating organization, please carefully review provisions on "Contracts and Subawards" [here](#). Applicants proposing to provide a voluntary cost-match or other form of leveraging to demonstrate collaboration and

support for the project should describe that in this section in accordance with the voluntary cost share requirements in Section III of this announcement.

**6. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (15 points)**

Submit a list (of no more than 5 each) of federally-funded assistance agreements<sup>5</sup> (including but not limited to previous GLRI awards from EPA or other federal sources) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that the applicant and the applicant's institution has previously performed.

**If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score of for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). Failure to indicate this may result in 0 points for these factors.**

In evaluating applicants under these factors 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 federal agency grantors (*e.g.*, to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).

**a) Principal Investigator's past history of managing agreements (2 points)**

Describe whether, and how, the Principal Investigator has been able to successfully, and in a timely manner, complete and manage those agreements in accordance with the initial project schedule.

**b) Institution's past history of managing agreements (1 points)**

Describe whether, and how, your institution was able to successfully, and in a timely manner, complete and manage those agreements in accordance with the initial project schedule.

**c) Principal Investigator's history of meeting reporting requirements (2 points)**

Describe the Principal Investigator's history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether the Principal Investigator adequately and timely reported on progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not), and how you adequately complied with the terms and conditions of previous awards. Please include a description of your past history of submitting acceptable final technical reports.

**d) Institution's History of Meeting Reporting Requirements (2 points)**

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<sup>5</sup> For purposes of this section, assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements, but not federal or other contracts.

Describe your institution's history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether your institution complied adequately and in a timely manner with the terms and conditions of previous awards (and if not, explain why not).

**e) Past Project Expenditure Rate (3 points)**

If you or your institution have previously received a GLRI award or awards issued in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019, please provide an explanation of and documentation supporting the project's quarterly rate of expenditure on those prior GLRI awards.

**f) Staff Expertise (5 points)**

Provide information on your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. Applicants should also demonstrate expertise in low-level persistent toxic chemical measurements through publications in the literature relevant to the Great Lakes and environmental science, chemistry and technology. Resumes or a curriculum vitae (CV) may be attached as optional documentation according to Item 9 of Appendix I.

- 7. Education/Outreach (5 points)** Applicants will be evaluated based on the effectiveness of their education/outreach plans to disseminate project results to interested stakeholders including, but not limited to, whether the applicant has a demonstrated track record of outreach to inform citizens on environmental issues and the potential of the project for transferability and applicability to other places.

**8. Budget (20 points)**

Describe with specificity your plan for how EPA funds will be used.

**a) Detailed Budget Narrative (15 points): (Also see Appendix II, Budget Sample).**

Applications will be evaluated based on the reasonableness, necessity and allowability (of costs) of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and for the expected benefits to be achieved.

An applicant's budget and budget narrative must account for both federal funds and any non-federal funds (*e.g.*, any voluntary cost-share/match if applicable). Applicants must precisely describe in their budget narrative how they will account for any voluntary cost-share/match or other non-EPA funds if applicable and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.

**b) Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds (5 points)**

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

**Selection Process:** Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by a review panel composed of federal agency staff.

Final funding decisions will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decision, the selection official will consider the review panel rankings and recommendations and may also consider program priorities.

**Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into RFA:** [Additional provisions](#) that apply to this RFA and/or awards made under this RFA, including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance, can be found [here](#).

These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants **must** review them when preparing proposals for this RFA. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA General RFA contact listed in Section VII this announcement to obtain the provisions.

## VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

**A. Award Notices and Status:** EPA anticipates that notification to successful applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by July, 2020. 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 EPA Region 5 Grants Management Office. 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.

**B. Combining Applications Into One Award:** If an applicant submits applications for multiple tasks/activities under this competition, and is selected for multiple tasks/activities, EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines separate applications for different tasks/activities.

**C. Administrative and National Policy Requirement:** The successful applicants will be required to adhere to federal grants requirements, particularly those found in applicable Cost Principles ([2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E](#)), Administrative Requirements ([2 CFR Parts 200](#) and

1500), and Audit Requirements ([2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F, Circular No. A133](#)). This includes government wide requirements pertaining to accounting standards, lobbying, minority or woman owned business enterprises, publication, meetings, construction, and disposition of property. Additional EPA regulations are codified in [Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#). A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at [EPA Policies and Guidance for Grants](#).

**D. Quality System Documentation:** Quality system documentation (*i.e.*, quality assurance project plans or quality management plans) is required for grants involving the use or collection of environmental data. EPA **must** have this documentation within 90 days of award and it **must** be approved **before grantees commence activities associated with the use or collection of environmental data**. Applicants should budget time and resources for developing quality system documentation. **Applicants that do not do so may have to fund the quality system documentation and any necessary project changes out of their own funds**. A significant percentage of EPA's previously awarded GLRI grants required quality system documentation. Please review specific guidance on [GLNPO's quality requirements](#).

**E. Reporting Requirements:** Applicants selected for funding shall provide narrative technical progress reports addressing financial and work progress. Applicants may be required to input data directly into an online Great Lakes Accountability System database that was developed for the purpose of collecting and reporting information about GLRI. Special conditions requiring financial and progress reporting and a detailed final technical report will be added to awards. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If selected, applicants may be asked to revise their anticipated fiscal expenditure projections on a quarterly basis in order to monitor the progress of the awarded project. These projections should be submitted as a part of the fiscal and technical reporting.

**F. Other Programmatic Requirements:** Additional applicable programmatic terms and conditions will be included in grant agreements, including provisions for: signage for on-the-ground projects, and EPA pre-approval of subcontracting and of conference participation. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

**G. Issuance of Awards:** EPA reserves the right to negotiate appropriate changes in project terms and amounts (*i.e.*, changes that do not affect the integrity of the competition or materially change the application) consistent with EPA Order 5700.5A1 and other applicable policies, before making final decisions and awards. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards. Applicants may be asked to include greater detail and specificity for their work plans before final awards are issued. Applicants may also be requested to satisfy data quality or peer review requirements before or shortly after the awarding of grants.

**H. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into RFA.** [Additional provisions](#) that apply to this RFA and/or awards made under this RFA, including but not limited to those related to human subjects, data access and information release, nonprofit administrative

capability, subaward and executive compensation reporting, SAM and DUNS requirements, unliquidated obligations, website references, tax liabilities and felony convictions, unfair competitive advantage, exchange network, disputes, copyrights, restrictions on use of federal funds, and competency of organizations generating environmental measurement data, can be found [here](#).

These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants **must** review them when preparing proposals for this RFA. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this RFA to obtain the provisions.

## VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

**General RFA Contact:** (For administrative, eligibility, and other general RFA questions):

- Ben Alsip, 312-886-0988 / [GLRI-RFA@epa.gov](mailto:GLRI-RFA@epa.gov)

**EPA GLSSP Technical Lead:**

- Brian Lenell, 312-353-4891 / [lenell.brian@epa.gov](mailto:lenell.brian@epa.gov)

## VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

GLNPO will send an e-mail announcement of these and any of its funding opportunities to all who [register](#).

## IX. Appendix I

### Grants.gov Submission Instructions

Please follow the instructions for applying for grant opportunities through Grants.gov [here](#).

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <https://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <https://www.grants.gov>. Go to <https://www.grants.gov> and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R5-GL2020-SSP, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.469), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <https://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to <https://www.grants.gov> and click “Browse Agencies” in the middle of the page and then go to “Environmental Protection Agency” to find the EPA funding opportunities.

Proposal Submission Deadline: Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through <https://www.grants.gov> no later than June 27, 2020, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET). Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all of the application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the “Show Instructions” tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

#### Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

#### Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre award Compliance Review Report
5. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section V of the announcement

#### Optional Documents:

6. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL), if applicable
7. Resumes and/ or CVs
8. Other Attachments, if applicable

Applications submitted through <https://www.grants.gov> will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Brian Lenell at: [lenell.brian@epa.gov](mailto:lenell.brian@epa.gov). Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

**Technical Issues with Submission:** Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced, or a revised application needs to be submitted.

**Submitting the Application:** The application package must be transferred to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. The Internet browser will launch, and a sign-in page will appear. Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) BEFORE the due date identified in [Section IV](#) of the solicitation. The [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays. A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the



computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission.

*NOTE:* [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.

**Transmission Difficulties:** If transmission difficulties result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application, and following the above instructions does not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to [lenell.brian@epa.gov](mailto:lenell.brian@epa.gov) with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Brian Lenell at 312-353-4891. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant SAM.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

- A. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), it is essential to call [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Brian Lenell at 312-353-4891.
- B. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to [lenell.brian@epa.gov](mailto:lenell.brian@epa.gov) prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.
- C. [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to [lenell.brian@epa.gov](mailto:lenell.brian@epa.gov) with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

*NOTE:* Successful submission through Grants.gov or via email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

## X. Appendix II

### Budget Sample

#### Budget Detail

This section of the work plan is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A, and **must** include a detailed discussion of how EPA funds will be used. Applicants **must itemize** costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

If the project budget includes any voluntary cost share, the Budget Detail portion of the narrative proposal **must** include a detailed description of how the applicant will obtain the cost-share and how the cost-share funding will be used. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost-share, applicants **must** meet their sharing commitment as a legal condition of receiving EPA funding. If the proposed cost-share is to be provided by a third-party, a letter of commitment is required. Any form of cost-share included in the Budget Detail **must** also be included on the SF 424 and SF 424A. Please see Sections III and Section IV.C.2.B.iii of this RFA for more detailed information on cost-share.

Applicants should use the following instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table to complete the Budget Detail section of the work plan. Use only whole dollar amounts.

- 1. Personnel - List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.** This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (generally, paid employees of the applicant organization). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the “Other” category; or (3) effort that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization’s negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail **must** identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.
- 2. Fringe Benefits - Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included.** Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages.

Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment benefit plans.

- 3. Travel - Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-State and out-of-State and international (include specific international locations), number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.** Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (*e.g.*, inspections) or related to proposed project activities (*e.g.*, attendance at meetings). Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the “Other” category.
- 4. Equipment - Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.** Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts. These types of proposed costs should be included in the “Other” category. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 CFR 200 and or 2 CFR 1500. The budget detail **must** include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project.
- 5. Supplies - “Supplies” means all tangible personal property other than “equipment”.** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (*e.g.*, laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the “Other” category.
- 6. Contractual - Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual/consultant services are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the “Other” category. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or noncompetitive), if known.
- 7. Other - List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs

that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance, rental/lease of equipment or supplies, equipment service or maintenance contracts, printing or photocopying, rebates, and subaward costs. Subawards (e.g., subgrants) are a distinct type of cost in this category. The term “subaward” means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient. This term does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants **must** provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work and a description of the types of activities to be supported.

**8. Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.**

Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project, and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, the applicant **must** have a federal or state negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final or provisional), or **must** have submitted a proposal to the cognizant federal or state agency. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:

- Personnel (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs)
- Personnel and Fringe (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs)
- Total Direct Costs (Indirect Rate x Total direct costs = Indirect Costs)
- Direct Costs minus distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment
- (Indirect Rate x (total direct cost – distorting factors) = Indirect Costs)

**Example Budget Table**

|  | EPA Funding     | Cost-Share      |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Personnel</b>                                     |                 |                 |
| (1) Project Manager @ \$40/hr x 10 hrs/week x 52 wks |                 | \$20,800        |
| (5) Project Staff @ \$30/hr x 40 hrs/week x 40 wks   | \$244,000       |                 |
| TOTAL PERSONNEL                                      | \$244,000       | \$20,800        |
| <b>Fringe Benefits</b>                               |                 |                 |
| 20% of Salary and Wages                              | 20% (\$244,000) | 20%<br>(20,800) |
| - Retirement, Health Benefits, FICA, SUI             | \$48,800        | \$4,160         |
| TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS                                | \$48,800        | \$4,160         |
| <b>Travel</b>  |                 |                 |

|   |              |          |
|---|--------------|----------|
| In State travel for Project Manager and staff: 500 mi/mo @ \$0.55/mi x 12 mos.                          | \$3,300      |          |
| Out of State (IL, WI, IA) Travel for Project Staff: 20 trips per month x \$2,500 per trip               | \$600,000    |          |
| SOLEC Meeting (Toronto, Canada) Travel for Project Manager: 2 trips/year x \$3,500 each                 | \$7,000      |          |
| TOTAL TRAVEL  | \$610,300    |          |
| <b>Equipment</b>  |              |          |
| Transducer, coupling, and software package  | \$25,700     |          |
| Electrofishing boom shocker (2 x \$7,500 each)  | \$15,000     |          |
| 1 Project Vehicle   | \$25,000     |          |
| 1 Project Boat  | \$15,000     |          |
| TOTAL EQUIPMENT   | 81,100       |          |
| <b>Supplies</b>   |              |          |
| Office and related supplies to support training   | \$400        |          |
| Office computer and printer   | \$2,500      |          |
| TOTAL SUPPLIES  | \$2,900      |          |
| <b>Contractual</b>  |              |          |
| ABC Support Services Contract   | \$100,000    |          |
| XYZ Land & Water Conservation   | \$66,400     |          |
| TOTAL CONTRACTUAL   | \$166,400    |          |
| <b>Other</b>  |              |          |
| Travel for 3 representatives to attend workshop training – 100 trips x \$1,000 each                     | \$100,000    |          |
| Travel for 4 representatives to attend workshop training – 200 trips x \$2,000 each                     | \$400,000    |          |
| TOTAL OTHER   | \$500,000    |          |
| <b>Indirect Charges</b>   |              |          |
| Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate = 10% (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs; as negotiated) | \$26,480     |          |
| TOTAL INDIRECT  | \$26,480     |          |
| TOTAL FUNDING   | \$1,679,580  | \$24,960 |
| TOTAL PROJECT COST  | \$1, 704,540 |          |

\*\* Any voluntary cost-share funds, while not required under this RFA, **must** also be included on the SF-424A as detailed in Section IV of this RFA. Federal funds are not allowed to be used for cost share; please identify the source of the cost share in your budget narrative.

**Expeditious Spending and Sufficient Progress in the use of GLRI Funds:** Include an explanation of how, if the applicant is awarded a grant, they will ensure that the funding will be used expeditiously.