

Question Category	Question	Answer
COVID-19	Should we address the potential impact of COVID-19?	Applications should incorporate plans to respond to any anticipated conditions that may affect progress.
COVID-19	In the narrative, are you expecting any more specific information than a statement that we will comply with the State's, University's, and EPA's restrictions on activities in response to COVID-19?	Yes, more information should be included in the narrative proposal. Page 17 of the RFA discusses contents and format of the narrative proposal. Scoring criteria for the narrative proposal is also outlined in Section V (page 23) of the RFA. There is a list of scoring criteria that the narrative is evaluated on. In your narrative, you may include plans to respond to conditions that arise from COVID-19 or any anticipated conditions that may affect progress.
Application Submission	Is the June 27, 2020 date the correct deadline?	The end date for the application period was based on when the RFA was made available for potential applicants. The close date of 6/27/2020 is correct. If submitting on a Saturday is problematic, you can always submit on an earlier weekday. We will be available to answer questions during the week, but Grants.gov support is available 24/7, excluding federal holidays.
Eligibility	Are applicants or collaborators from outside the Great Lakes region eligible?	The RFA does not require applicants or collaborators to be located within the Great Lakes basin or region.
Eligibility	Are foreign entities/institutions eligible to apply, be subawardees, or be included as collaborators?	<p>Per p1 of the RFA, foreign organizations and governments are not eligible recipients of the award. However, foreign organizations are eligible to be subrecipients and receive subawards. See EPA Subaward Policy, Appendix B: National Term and Condition for Subawards, item 10 for more information on subawards to foreign entities. Foreign/internationally-based researchers and/or organizations can be included as collaborators.</p> <p>EPA Subaward Policy Appendix B: National Term and Condition for Subawards</p>
Contracting and Subawards	Are federal agencies able to receive pass-through funding from an eligible applicant to help with proposed work?	<p>Federal agencies could be eligible to receive pass-through funding from the eventual grantee on the award. See EPA Subaward Policy, 7(b)2 on p4: EPA Subaward Policy</p> <p>For the eventual grantee to pass funds through to a collaborating federal agency (e.g., USGS), the federal agency would need to have the statutory authority to provide services to non-Federal entities on a reimbursable basis or otherwise receive and use funds from non-Federal entities. The RFA applicant (i.e., non-federal entity) should identify this statutory authority in their application if they propose to pass funding through to a federal agency.</p> <p>Note that these funds would not be considered subawards, though these amounts would still be classified in the Other object class category of the project budget.</p>
Contracting and Subawards	Are you anticipating that this award will be granted to one laboratory, one institution, or a consortium of institutions?	The Coalitions section is located on page 12 of the RFA. Two or more eligible applicants can submit a single application under the RFA. But one single entity will be the recipient of the grant. In cases such as this, coalitions must identify which organization will be the recipient of the grant and which will be subawardees.
Narrative Proposal	In Table 2 of the RFA, PFCA is a group. We will propose X number of individual analytes, so "PFCA" may not be seen on our list. Will EPA accept this analyte list?	EPA and the awardee will discuss the final analyte list after the application is selected for funding. But in instances like this, applicants are advised to ensure that the components required in the RFA are sufficiently addressed, organized, and labeled. You are welcome to propose additional analytes as long as a justification is provided in your proposal.

Narrative Proposal	Is there a restriction on regional vs. national vs. international meetings we plan on attending?	There is no restriction on where conferences and meetings are held that you would attend using award funding. However, all costs, including travel and conference costs, will be evaluated on their reasonableness and necessity to carry out the workplan objectives. Additionally, if there is travel outside of the United States, prior authorization must be initiated through your EPA Project Officer.
Narrative Proposal	On p6 and p19, the RFA says to collect roughly two to three sediment cores per lake (one in each basin for each lake). My understanding was that there were five Great Lakes Basins, with one per lake. Could you clarify if my understanding is incorrect?	Each lake is divided into basins within. As noted in the map uploaded to the GLSSP RFA site, Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, and Erie each have three basins, while Lake Ontario has two. Note, these are different than the hydrological drainage basins feeding into each lake from their surrounding land masses.
Narrative Proposal	Can you please provide guidance as to the desired length and format of CVs going into the appendix?	There is no desired length or format requirements of CVs going into the appendix. You are welcome to share all relevant expertise in conducting sampling efforts and analysis of low-level persistent toxic chemical measurements. Appendix I (page 32) of the RFA has a list of mandatory and optional documents to be submitted with your application.
Narrative Proposal	Can projects performed in the past 3 years only be included in the section IV.C.2.5 of the narrative? Page 20 mentions this is the case, but page 26 does not.	Please submit a list of projects within the last three years. Section IV (page 20) references what the application package should contain. Whereas Section V (page 26) discusses how the submission will be evaluated. Apologies for this not being clear.
Narrative Proposal	Does "staff" in item IV.C.2.5 in the middle of p. 21 of the RFA include PIs as well as research scientists?	Staff may include PIs, research scientists, or any other collaborators that will be assisting in collection and analysis of sediment samples.
Narrative Proposal	The period to provide explanation of and documentation supporting the quarterly rate of expenditure on past GLRI awards is 2010-2019 on p21, and then listed as 2015-2019 on p27. Which period is required to provide?	2015-2019. RFA modification 2 has corrected this inconsistency.
Narrative Proposal	Is the information required to support quarterly rates of expenditure on GLRI awards from 2015-2019 pertaining to me specifically as a PI, or my institution?	This information is required on any GLRI awards your institution has received 2015-2019. RFA modification 2 has clarified this.
Technical Capabilities	Are there any archived samples from the 2010-2014 sampling campaign that could be used to demonstrate data continuity?	Page 17 of the RFA under the "Narrative Proposal" section discusses that the award recipient will need to demonstrate comparability with existing data through the analysis of 10 check samples. There is no available archive of sediment samples from the 2010-2014. GLNPO will discuss details of the check samples with the award recipient prior to analysis of the environmental samples.

Technical Capabilities	To participate in the project, do we need to have the analyses run in an EPA-certified laboratory?	<p>Samples do not need to be analyzed at an EPA-certified laboratory.</p> <p>The "Work Plan" paragraph on p19 of the RFA discusses sample analysis activities. Applicants need to describe their proposed analysis methods for required analytes and discuss minimum detection limits for each proposed method.</p> <p>In the "Programmatic Capability and Past Performance" paragraph on p20, it states that applicants must demonstrate expertise on low-level persistent toxic chemical measurements, using proposed methods. So no mention of lab accreditation, but demonstrating expertise is required. There are also requirements for developing a Quality Assurance Project Plan listed under "Required Activities" on p9.</p> <p>Applications will be evaluated on the criteria specified under Section V "Application Review and Selection Process".</p>
GLSSP History	Would it be possible to get a map of the specific basins within each lake to make sure I'm working with the correct delineation?	A link to a .jpg image will be uploaded onto the GLSSP RFA website.
GLSSP History	Has this contaminant program been ongoing since 2014?	Sampling conducted under the first GLSSP grant awarded in 2010 sampled the lakes from 2010-2015. As with the first GLSSP grant and as specified in this current RFA, the lakes are sampled on the CSMI rotation.
GLSSP History	Is the 2010-2015 data available on the Great Lakes Environmental Database (GLENDa)?	The data collected from 2010-2015 is not available on GLENDa at this time. Results from the previous GLSSP grant are published in peer-reviewed literature. Data from 2010-2015 will be provided to the awardee.
GLSSP History	Would you please list the differences between the first and modified RFA?	<p>See the GLSSP RFA Modification Notice on the GLSSP RFA site. https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-06/documents/glssp-rfa-modification-notice-20200522-1pg.pdf</p>
Additional Research	Someone forwarded me the GLSSP RFA. While I'm not in a situation to apply to this RFA, I did have a question about the possibility of some exploratory research involving a unique and novel methodology. I would be interested in partnering with the EPA to pursue such research.	<p>GLNPO does not currently have any funding opportunities posted for such projects. GLNPO grants generally are awarded following a competitive process. We have begun posting grant opportunities available from Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding to: https://www.glri.us/funding#grant-oppo</p> <p>GLNPO also announces grant opportunities from our office GreatLakesNews registrants. If you haven't already registered for GreatLakesNews, please send an email to: join-greatlakesnews@lists.epa.gov</p> <p>Finally, information about all federal funding opportunities is available from the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. See: https://beta.sam.gov/</p>
Additional Research	Is it expected or even allowed that the proposal includes sampling of other environmental matrices? Or is expected that part of the proposed work will be a comparison to results from IADN or biomonitoring campaigns that are administered separately?	You are welcome to propose and justify sampling of other matrices. These analyses would be performed in addition to the required sediment analytes in Table 2 on page 8 of the RFA. Collaboration with GLNPO, GLNPO's other chemical surveillance monitoring program grantees, and USGS is expected per the RFA section entitled "Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program Background, Goals, and Objectives" on pages 5-6. Use of other GLNPO monitoring program data to aid in interpretation of results would be appropriate.

Additional Research	Does an SOP exist for this program? If so where is it located?	Currently there are no GLNPO SOPs for this program; it is our expectation that the recipient will work with EPA and USGS to develop sampling and analysis SOPs.
Additional Research	Are bulk density measurements measured as an in-situ surrogate aboard the Lake Guardian, or if it is performed later in lab?	Bulk density measurements are not performed onboard the R/V <i>Lake Guardian</i> ; analyses are performed later in the laboratory.
Additional Research	Could you elaborate on what chemicals you expect in the non-DP chlorinated flame retardants category?	We don't want to be prescriptive in the types of chemicals applicants propose to analyze. We encourage you to offer whatever type of analysis you feel that is important to the program. To possibly offer some clarification, these would be chlorinated flame retardants that do not contain the Dechlorane Plus additive.
Additional Research	Connecting rivers are mentioned on p1. Is river sampling a required activity?	Riverine sampling is not required, but may be proposed and justified in your application. Any proposed sampling locations inaccessible to the R/V <i>Lake Guardian</i> must be accompanied with a budget to accommodate additional sampling along with alternate vessel arrangements.