OGD Grants Award Process Webinar, January 26, 2022
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1:   If our organization has been awarded EPA grants in the past, are we currently eligible for others?

A1:   Eligibility is specific to each grant program; however, if you have received EPA grants in the past under a program, it would be worth looking into current opportunities under that program and additional EPA programs.

Q2:   Does EPA have a training on the Subrecipient Policy and how to determine which non-discretionary federal laws must be passed through with an award?

A2:   The Subaward Policy training is in the process of being updated and will be available once it's ready. Our home page will get you to the available trainings: https://www.epa.gov/grants.

Q3:   Has EPA identified a date for transitioning from DUNS to UEI in Grants.gov application forms? I realize the referenced RAIN does not identify a change date.

A3:   EPA updated RAIN-2021-G01-R1 on February 4, 2022. Competitive programs with closing dates of April 1, 2022, will use UEI grant application packages and associated UEI compatible forms. Noncompetitive programs will transition February 21,2022.

Q4:   Should a department or an agency have one UEI?

A4:   SAM.gov allows for parent and child entities. However, each entity wishing to do business with the federal government must register in SAM.gov and have a UEI. To learn more about UEI, please take a look at the resources in RAIN-2021-G01-R1 at https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2021-g01-r1. You can also find information about UEI directly on SAM.gov at: https://sam.gov/content/duns-uei.

Q5:   Do you have any information on when the next EPA Exchange Network RFP will be published in the Federal Register or any other details?

A5:   EPA RFAs are not published in the Federal Registrar but rather to Grants.gov. Currently, we do not have specific information on the EPA Exchange Network's anticipated RFA publication. We recommend that you use the subscription feature in Grants.gov to receive notifications about this specific opportunity or other specific agency and program opportunities.

Q6:   Does EPA have a general guide similar to NSF's Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG)?

A6:   The NSF (National Science Foundation) received an OMB exception to codify 2 CFR 200 in an annual policy document. EPA codified 2 CFR 200 and supplemented them with agency-specific regulations. They are located at 2 CFR 1500: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-XV/part-1500.

Q7:   Will any make-or-break requirements be in Additional Provisions like sex, race, etc.?

  A7:   Currently, we do not have any plans for anything like that, but it's something that's continually under review, and EPA's Office of Civil Rights is definitely looking at all angles of that and what EPA should be doing to ensure compliance in those areas. So while there is not anything right now, if there is, we will definitely be sharing that publicly and notifying applicants. Please take a look at the current EPA Solicitation Clauses at: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-12/external-clauses-2021-12-03.pdf.

Q8:   Obviously a lot of funding will be coming to the EPA by way of some of the new legislation. Will EPA be hosting any webinars to discuss timelines, etc. on how this funding might be allocated/when grants will open, etc.?

  A8:   I assume you are referring to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Information about how EPA is implementing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)and associated funding can be found at https://www.epa.gov/infrastructure.

Q9:   Our tribe has a lot of grants that we apply for, therefore we have a centralized Grants and Contracts that submits to Grants.gov. Has a notification for the new requirement for SAM number and the new UEI been sent out?

  A9:   Yes. EPA has issued RAIN-2021-G01-R1 and a companion EPA Grants Update Listserv message. In addition to EPA's outreach on the DUNS to UEI transition, the General Services Administration (GSA) who owns and manages SAM.gov has extensive resources on UEI. Please visit https://sam.gov/content/duns-uei to learn more about what you need to do as an entity/organization.

Q10:   There is a lot of funding that will be going towards local and state governments. I am worried that there are not enough grant writers in these agencies available to make the most of these funds. Does EPA ever evaluate whether there is enough staff capacity in smaller agencies?

  A10:   EPA is not in a position to evaluate applicant capacity to have adequate staff to compete for federal financial assistance (i.e., grants). EPA is cognizant of challenges smaller entities and some applicant types have when applying for EPA competitive grant programs. Regarding the BIL funding EPA will receive, information about how EPA is implementing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and associated funding can be found at https://www.epa.gov/infrastructure.

Q11:   Will the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investment in P2 be rolled out as a new program and/or will there be more funds put in existing P2 grant programs?

  A11:   The specific details of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding and the associated grants programs have not been determined yet. If you are curious about a specific grant program, please inquire with the program point of contact either on the EPA website or the Assistance Listing (CFDA) point of contact.

Q12:   Would the best way to find out future information/updates about EPA-designated Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds be by subscribing to the EPA listserv mentioned in the beginning of this presentation? Or is there a specific other link we should be looking towards for updates on funding, webinars, etc.?

A12:   Information about how EPA is implementing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and associated funding can be found at https://www.epa.gov/infrastructure.

Q13:   Are these grants only available for non-profit organizations or are small businesses able to apply?

A13:   EPA does have an SBIR program (Small Business Innovation Research Program). More information can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/sbir. Non-profit organizations are eligible entities for many EPA grants programs. Eligibility is specific to each grant program. Please check the eligibility requirements of the specific EPA funding opportunity to determine whether non-profit organizations are eligible. You can also search grants.gov using and eligibility filter and select non-profit organizations to see all federal funding opportunities where non-profit organizations are eligible.

Q14:   Where can we find procurement guidelines to use after we are awarded a grant?

A14:   Procurement Regulations are available at 2 CFR 220.317 - 200.327. EPA does have some specific regulations 2 CFR 1500 on procurement standards at 2 CFR 1500.10 and 2 CFR 1500.11. This page also provides policy and guidance documents, including one on procurement: https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grants-policy-resources.

Q15:   Once you receive notification of the award, you have to submit a QAPP before you spend any funds. The problem is that many environmental projects are tied to time, like seasons, and delays preparing a QAPP before initiating sampling/measuring may delay the project substantially.

A15:   In order to ensure quality of the measurements being taken and the data being collected, we have to have a QAPP in place. If you are concerned about timing, please reach out to the Project Officer on that grant or the QAPP Coordinator/QA Coordinator.

Q16:   Are there ongoing reporting requirements for equipment beyond the term of the award?

A16:   Yes. All federal awards, including EPA awards, require reporting requirements beyond the "term of the award" or period of performance to close out the award. Please see https://www.epa.gov/grants/frequent-questions-about-closeouts. There are also record retention requirements. These details are outlined in our award terms and conditions. General Terms and Conditions are available at https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-terms-and-conditions. Program-specific Terms and Conditions will detail the specific cadence and any additional program specific reporting requirements.

Q17:   Can you outline the pre-award certification through affirmation of award process?

A17:   The pre-award certification only applies to nonprofit organizations, and only nonprofit organizations that are receiving $200,000 or more. Currently, that is the policy. If you are a nonprofit that triggers the pre-award certification process, EPA will reach out to you and give you a questionnaire to fill out to make sure you have the right policies and

procedures in place. If you do not, EPA will work with you to help you get those policies and procedures in place.

For the affirmation of award process, once EPA has signed the award document and the Grants Management Office sends it to you, you will have 21 days to read it and raise any potential issues. If those 21 days go by and you don't raise any objections or any concerns, then you automatically accept the award. Also, if you draw down funds, you automatically accept the award. When you receive the notice of award, make sure you make note of the date and ask any questions or raise any issues within 21 days.