2022 Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities

Request for Applications Information Session

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Welcome to the 2022 Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities Informational Webinar.

The Webinar will begin shortly.

Note: This webinar is intended to provide an overview of the Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities Request for Applications (RFA).

Overview

- **Introduction**
- **Scope of Work**
- **Example Activities**
- **Who Can Apply?**
- **Evaluation Process:**
  - Review & Selection Process
  - Evaluation Criteria
- **Application Process**
- **Questions & Answers**

Introduction:
2022 Important Dates

Jan. 14, 2022	Optional Intent to Apply
Feb. 18, 2022	Last day to submit questions
Feb. 25, 11:59PM ET	RFA Closes- Applications Due
July/Aug. 2022	Anticipated notification of selections
Sept./Oct. 2022	Anticipated awards

- Submit your Intent to Apply to AirMonitoring@epa.gov
  - See the RFA page 1 for more information and submit as soon as possible

Introduction

- Funding via cooperative agreements or grants

- RFA at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-communities

  - Questions and Answers are posted here weekly until Feb. 22.

- Applications due Friday, **February 25**, 11:59PM ET, via Grants.gov: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=336951

Introduction – Summary

- The funding is for eligible entities to conduct ambient air monitoring of pollutants of greatest concern in communities with environmental and health outcome disparities stemming from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The goals of the competition:
  - Enhance air quality monitoring in and near underserved communities across the United States.
  - Support community and local efforts to monitor their own air quality and to promote air quality monitoring partnerships between communities and tribal, state, and local governments.

Introduction – Funding Amounts

- Estimated total funding - **$20 million**
- Maximum funding requested per application
  - **$25,000 to $100,000** 'Small Grants' (approx. 20-30 awarded)
  - **$100,000 to $500,000** 'Large Grants' (approx. 30-40 awarded)
  - Should be commensurate with the proposed activities
- Set-asides:
  - Approximately **$2 million for tribal governments**
  - Approximately **$2 million for community-based organizations**
  - Applications for each set-aside will be reviewed and ranked separately
  - EPA may increase or decrease the amounts and number of projects selected under each set-aside based on the number of meritorious applications received, agency priorities, funding availability, and other applicable considerations

Introduction:
Application Submission Limit

- Applicants can submit a total of two (2) applications overall under this solicitation.

- If an applicant is submitting two (2) applications each application must be for a different project type and must be submitted separately.

- Applicants can target multiple air pollutants and/or air monitoring methods within one application, but they cannot include the same project(s) in multiple applications.

Scope of Work

- EPA's objective in issuing these awards is to enable communities to monitor their own air quality and to promote monitoring partnerships between communities and tribal, state, and/or local governments that:

  - Leverage existing air quality monitoring expertise;
  - Expand use of community monitoring advisory groups and other approaches that give the community a voice in the monitoring of their air quality; and
  - Build a foundation of trusting relationships and enhanced understanding from which sustainable solutions to community air pollution problems can be found.

Scope of Work: Pollutant Scope

To be considered for funding under this RFA, each application must address at least one of the following:

- Carbon Monoxide
- Lead
- Nitrogen Dioxide
- Ozone, including ozone precursors
- Sulfur Dioxide
- Particle Pollution (ultrafine, $PM_{2.5}$, or PM_{10}), including aerosol composition and PM precursors

- Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs), commonly referred to as air toxics. A full list of HAPs is available here: https://www.epa.gov/haps/initial-list-hazardous-air-pollutants-modifications#mods .

Scope of Work:
Air Monitoring Technology

- Projects must utilize commercially available air quality monitoring equipment, EPA procedures and/or other air quality methods that have been previously researched and documented in literature. This can include air sensors.

- EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA.

Example Activities

Examples of possible measurable outputs may include:

- Identification of air pollution;

- Community-specific assessments of air pollution data;

- Deployment of equipment to conduct air quality monitoring in or near underserved communities;

- Near real-time air quality data availability for communities and other stakeholders; and,

- Promotion of partnerships and community involvement through various activities and information exchanges.

Who Can Apply?

Applications will be accepted from

- States (including the District of Columbia)

- Local governments

- U.S. territories and possessions

- Indian tribes

- Public or private nonprofit organizations

- Public and private hospitals and laboratories

- Note that eligible entities can partner with ineligible entities under EPA's Subaward Policy: https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients.

Who Can Apply:
What is a nonprofit?

Nonprofit organization, as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that:

(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. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations.

Who Can Apply for Set-Asides?

- Tribal set-aside:
  - The applicant must meet the definition of Indian tribe under Section 302(r) of the Clean Air Act: "The term 'Indian tribe' means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including Alaska Native village, which is Federally recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians."

- Community-based organization set-aside:
  - The applicant must be an eligible nonprofit or not for profit corporation in good standing under state or tribal law with authority to enter into binding legal agreements.
  - The applicant does not need to be tax exempt under the Internal Revenue Code but may use documentation of tax-exempt status to demonstrate that it is a nonprofit.
  - The applicant must specify the community they represent and provide documentation, such as their charter, mission statement, or other official documentation of the organization; and include a statement demonstrating the effectiveness as a representative of the applicable community.

Evaluation Process: Threshold Criteria

- Step 1: Threshold Criteria Review (Section III.C.)
  - Must meet ALL 9 threshold criteria to move on to Step 2
    1. Substantially comply with submission instructions and content
    2. Support Goal 4 "Ensure Clean and Healthy Air for All Communities;" Objective 4.1: "Improve Air Quality and Reduce Localized Pollution and Health Impacts" of EPA's Draft FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan
    3. Cannot request <$25,000 or >$500,000
    4. Include a statement on quality assurance
    5. Specify whether they are applying for a set-aside and specify which set-aside. Applications that fail to identify a desired set-aside will be evaluated as though they selected the "no set-aside" option (i.e., they will be evaluated in the general pool of applications).

6. If applying for community-based organization set-aside:

    a. Provide documentation that it is a nonprofit or not for profit corporation under federal, state, or tribal law with authority to enter into binding legal agreements.

    b. Specify the community they represent and provide documentation, such as their charter, mission statement, or other official documentation of the organization.

    c. Include a statement demonstrating the effectiveness as a representative of the applicable community.

7. If applying for the tribal set-aside, applicants must meet the definition of Indian tribe under Section 302(r) of the Clean Air Act.

8. Address disproportionate and adverse environmental or human health impacts to underserved communities.

9. Address one or more of the air pollutants from Section I.B.

Evaluation Process

- Applications are also reviewed to determine if any activities are ineligible for funding (see Section III.D.)

- Step 2: Evaluation Criteria (Section V.A.)
  - 7 evaluation criteria – points assigned to each
  - Maximum 125 points possible (135 for community-based organization set-aside)

Review & Selection Process

- Each eligible application will be evaluated by an EPA evaluation team, which includes EPA Headquarters and Regional staff
- Proposals are ranked and scored by criteria in Section V.A.
- Team will provide preliminary funding recommendations to the EPA Headquarters Selection Official based on the proposal scores
- Final funding decisions made by this Selection Official based on ranking and preliminary recommendations of the evaluation team and other factors

Selection Process: Other Factors

The selection official may also consider the following other factors:

- Programmatic priorities;
- Geographic distribution of funds;
- Mix of small and large grants as described in Section II.C
- Availability of funds

Evaluation Criteria	Score
1. Project Summary and Approach	30
2. Community Involvement	25
3. Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities	10
4. Environmental Results—Outputs, Outcomes, and Performance Measures	20
5. Quality Assurance Statement	5
6. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance	15
7. Budget	20
Total	125

See the RFA's Appendix B for Project
Narrative instructions, format, and content

Detailed Project Summary
- Include specific details of every funded activity

A. Overall Project (20 Points)
- The overall proposed project consistent with the Scope of Work (Section I.B.), and the steps the applicant will take to meet the program objectives and execute the project.

B. Project Significance (10 Points)
- How the proposed project will support or benefit the public and the environment, and the relationship of the proposed project to the seriousness, extent, and urgency of the environmental or public health problems toward which the project is directed.

A. Community Partnerships (15 Points):
- How community partners and supporting organizations will participate in, directly assist in the design and performance of the project, and/or allow the applicant to more effectively perform the project. Any partners named in the application are subject to the "Contracts and Subawards" clause that can be accessed under Section IV.D. of the additional EPA Solicitation Clauses: www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses .

B. Community Engagement (10 Points):
- The extent to which the project addresses engagement with these communities and/or populations (see A above) to ensure their meaningful participation with respect to the design, planning, and performance of the project.

Evaluation Criteria:
2. Community Involvement

The following sub-criterion applies only to applications submitted under the **community-based organization set-aside**:

C. Community-Based Organization Set-Aside (10 Points):
- The extent to which an application establishes that the applicant is an effective "community-based organization" as defined in Section III.C. of this announcement, including their effectiveness as a representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and how the organization helps members of that community or segment obtain environmental, health, educational, or other social services.

Evaluation Criteria:
3. Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities (10 Points):

The quality and extent to which the project benefits people/communities of color, low income, tribal, and indigenous populations (and if applicable other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing medical conditions) that have been and/or are currently affected by disproportionate health outcomes from pollution and the COVID–19 pandemic, including these communities and/or populations that have experienced a lack of resources or other impediments to addressing these adverse impacts.

Evaluation Criteria:
4. Environmental Results

A. Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes (10 Points):
- The extent and quality to which the applicant identifies and proposes outputs and outcomes, as described in Section I.C.2. and 3.

B. Performance Measures and Plan (5 Points):
- The effectiveness of the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I.C. of this announcement.

C. Timeline and Milestones (5 Points):
- The reasonableness of the proposed timeline including key milestones for specific tasks and the likelihood of completion of the project's goals and objectives by project end.

Evaluation Criteria:
5. Quality Assurance Statement

Quality Assurance Statement (5 Points):

- EPA will evaluate the quality assurance and quality control practices that will be applied during the project to ensure that the results obtained satisfy the project objectives.

Evaluation Criteria:
6. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

A. Past Performance (5 Points):
- Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Appendix B, Section 5 of the solicitation.

B. Reporting Requirements (5 Points):
- History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Appendix B, Section 5 of the solicitation, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not.

Evaluation Criteria:
6. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance cont'd

C. Staff Expertise (5 Points):
- • - Staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Evaluation Criteria:
7. Budget

A. Budget Detail (5 Points):
- The proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type in the proper budget category for each activity the applicant is requesting funding.

B. Reasonableness of Costs (10 Points):
- Costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes.

C. Expenditure of Awarded Funds (5 Points):
- Their approach, procedures, and controls ensure that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

Application Process:
Where do I start?

- Read the 2021 Request for Applications (RFA) EPA-OAR-OAQPS-22-01: https://www.epa.gov/grants/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-communities

  – Regularly visit the Questions and Answers document on the RFA page above, which may be updated until February 22

    - Submit final questions via email to AirMonitoring@epa.gov by February 18th

Application Process:
How to Apply

1. Register your organization with Grants.gov

   - Applications must be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov

   - If not currently registered with Grants.gov, designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and begin the registration process as soon as possible.

   - The registration process requires that your organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take several weeks

Application Process:
How to Apply (Continued)

2. Go to the funding opportunity on Grants.gov
    https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=336951

3. Click the red "Apply" button in the upper right and create a Workspace

Note: All applications must be submitted through Grants.gov using the "Workspace" feature. Information can be found at the Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

4. Write your Project Narrative

   - Includes the Cover Page and Workplan; cannot exceed 12 pages

   - Must substantially comply with the specific instructions, format, and content as defined in Appendix B of the RFA

   - Save as a Word or pdf document

   - BE AWARE: The budget narrative and detail are part of the 12-page limit of the Project Narrative. It will <u>NOT</u> be reviewed if the Project Narrative is already 12 pages and the budget detail/narrative is included as a separate attachment.

5. Complete the mandatory forms:

   – See page 18 of RFA: SF-424, SF-424A, EPA Forms 4700-4 and 5700-54

6. Use the "Other Attachments" form to submit the mandatory documents, if applicable:

    - **Required –** Quality Assurance Statement

    - **Required –** Proof of Nonprofit Status (only for nonprofit applicants)

    - **Required –** Community-based organization documentation (only if applying for community-based org set-aside)

7. Use the "Other Attachments" form to submit the following optional documents

    - Project Team Biographies

    - Partnership Letter(s), if applicable

    - Approval Letter, if applicable to use alternate means to submit initial application

Application Process:
How to Apply (Continued)

8. Grants.gov: Fill out the required grant application forms and upload all required and optional attachments

   - Download PDFs of the forms, fill them out offline, then upload back to grants.gov; or

   - Complete the forms online as webforms

PACKAGE FORMS:

Mandatory Forms
(Click to Preview)

» Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) [V2.1]
» EPA Form 4700-4 [V2.1]
» Project Narrative Attachment Form [V1.2]
» EPA KEY CONTACTS FORM [V1.1]
» Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) [V1.0]
» Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) [V1.1]
» Other Attachments Form [V1.2]

Application Process:
How to Apply (Continued)

9. Grants.gov

    - The "Check Application" button runs a validation process to ensure all the forms are complete. If the validation fails, a list of errors will be displayed.

    - Once all forms are in "passed" status the "Sign and Submit" button will be active.

Application Process: Potential Pitfalls

- Grants.gov issues
  - CREATE AN ACCOUNT NOW
    - The registration process requires that your organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., DUNS) and a current registration with the System for Award Management (www.SAM.gov).
    - Grants.gov now requires users to sign up for and use their "Workspace" feature when applying for opportunities.
  - SUBMIT EARLY – late applications will not be accepted.
  - Minor problems with application submittal are NOT uncommon. Grants.gov offers 24-hour support, however some issues may take a few days to resolve.
  - See Appendix A for full grants.gov instructions