

**Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities  
Request for Applications (RFA)  
EPA-OAR-OAQPS-22-01  
Questions and Answers, as of **March 22, 2022**  
Includes Webinar Questions from January 11, 2022**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting applications for funding under the Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities grants competition (EPA-OAR-OAQPS-22-01).

The Request for Application and all application forms are available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=336951>. The deadline to apply is **March 25, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. (ET)**.

EPA hosted a Funding Opportunity Information Session on January 11, 2022. This document includes most of the questions asked during this session. The remaining questions will be added soon.

Please review all questions. If you have any additional questions, please email [AirMonitoring@epa.gov](mailto:AirMonitoring@epa.gov) by **March 18, 2022**. This is the final Questions and Answers file. Questions marked **NEW** or **UPDATED** have been added or revised since the last posting of the questions and answers document

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## I. General Questions

**Question 1:** How can potential grant applicants learn more?

**Answer 1:**

- Watch the Informational Webinar: EPA hosted a webinar to discuss this RFA. Participants had the opportunity to have their questions answered by EPA in a public forum. The recorded webinar is available here: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-communities> and the answered questions are included in this document. A general webinar on applying for EPA grants, along with additional information on enhanced air quality monitoring funding under the American Rescue Plan, is available here: <https://www.epa.gov/arp/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-funding-under-arp>.
- Review the *Question/Answer document on the website:* Applicants are encouraged to review the questions and answers document for further information about this grant program and RFA, available at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-communities>. EPA will respond to questions from applicants regarding:
  - Threshold eligibility clarification criteria;
  - Administrative issues related to the submission of the application;
  - Requests for about any of the language or provisions in the announcement; and,
  - Compliance with regulatory requirements and EPA guidance for competition for procurement of professional services and equipment purchases and entering into proper subawards.
- Email a Question to EPA: Applicants may email questions to [AirMonitoring@epa.gov](mailto:AirMonitoring@epa.gov). Questions must be submitted via email before March 18, 2022. EPA will answer relevant questions and post them in the Question/Answer document the following week while the RFA is open at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-communities>. All applicants are encouraged to check the document regularly.

**Question 2:** Are there flexibilities in this grant process due to the COVID-19 pandemic (See page 1 of the RFA)?

**Answer 2:** Yes, EPA is providing flexibilities to applicants experiencing challenges related to COVID-19. Please see the Flexibilities Available to Organizations Impacted by COVID-19 clause in Section IV of [EPA's Solicitation Clauses](#).

**Question 3:** Can EPA provide technical assistance or drafting assistance to grassroots community groups?

**Answer 3:** EPA has multiple trainings available online to assist entities that have limited (or no) experience applying for EPA or federal assistance and are interested in applying for grants. They include [How to Develop a Budget](#) and [EPA Grants Management Training for Applicants and Recipients](#). We also hosted and recorded a webinar on applying for grants, which is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/arp/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-funding-under-arp>. Also of note on this site is information about our upcoming webinar on the Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities Request for Applications (RFA), which we will host on January 11, 2022.

EPA cannot provide assistance to draft applications under a grant competition. Under Section I.F. on page 11 of the RFA we link to [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#) that apply to all EPA grant competitions. Section IV.b. of these Clauses includes this provision:

## **b. Pre-application/Application Assistance and Communications**

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications/applications. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about any of the language or provisions in the announcement. Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in Section VII as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting an application. In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making an eligibility determination.

**Question 4:** What is the difference between community partnerships and community engagement?

**Answer 4:** Community partnerships are where there is an established commitment from a partner that will be involved in the project (see Section I.B. on pages 6-7 of the RFA and Appendix B beginning on page 32). This can be demonstrated by including partnership letters in your application (see Section IV.C.3. on page 19 of the RFA). Community engagement can include community partnerships as well as other meaningful ways to work with the affected community, but it is more focused on your plan for engaging the community (see same sections noted earlier). Please be sure to note this distinction on page 32 of the RFA, where it describes how to address these two criteria and how they will be evaluated.

**Question 5:** What is the definition of “underserved community” for this grant competition?

**Answer 5:** See page 7 of the RFA:

“For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, “underserved communities” means people/communities of color, low income, tribal and indigenous populations, and other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those whose pre-existing medical conditions make them vulnerable to the adverse effects of air pollution.”

**Question 6:** Is there a Justice40 set-aside?

**Answer 6:** All applications under this competition “must address disproportionate and adverse environmental or human health impacts to underserved communities” as stated in Section III.C.8. on page 16 of the RFA. Additionally, all applications will be evaluated on how well their project promoted Environmental Justice and benefits underserved communities (see Section V.A.3. on page 21 of the RFA and Section 3 of Appendix B on page 33). It is anticipated that the grants funded under this competition will exceed the goals of Justice40.

**Question 7:** Does the data produced by the funded project have to be quantitative?

**Answer 7:** The data produced does not necessarily need to be quantitative, as long as the project is consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA. Specifically, “Applications should include detailed, well thought-out projects for enhancing air quality monitoring, including but not limited to: building capacity and knowledge of local-scale, real-time air quality; measuring levels of certain air pollutants; collecting data in situations where there is persistent and complex air pollution (e.g., wildfires); or advancing air monitoring system resiliency.”

**Question 8:** If a state agency submits two proposals for the competitive portion of the grant, will EPA consider funding both proposals or will EPA only fund one project per entity?

**Answer 8:** EPA may select both applications for an award. Please see Section VI.A. on page 24 that mentions EPA may combine both selected applications into one award.

**Question 9:** Do Ozone Advance or PM Advance communities receive any additional point considerations?

**Answer 9:** No, all applicants are reviewed and evaluated and reviewed solely against the evaluation criteria from Section V.A. of the RFA. Also be sure to review the review and selection process described in Section V.B. on page 23 of the RFA.

**Question 10:** How will EPA look at one vs two applications? Is it better to combine activities into one application?

**Answer 10:** All applicants are reviewed and evaluated and reviewed solely against the evaluation criteria from Section V.A. of the RFA. Also be sure to review the review and selection process described in Section V.B. on page 23 of the RFA. Applicants should submit their best possible application(s) based on the direction in Appendix B. We cannot comment on whether submitting one or two applications is better.

**Question 11:** Can you explain all the application options for community-based organizations? Can they apply for the set-aside only or the larger pot of funding or both?

**Answer 11:** An applicant that qualifies for one of the set-asides (community-based organizations or Indian tribes) may apply for either the set-aside they qualify for or the general pool of funding. As noted in Section III.C.5., if an entity fails to specify a desired set-aside, they will be evaluated as though they are not applying for one of the set-asides and will be evaluated under the general pool of applications.

**Question 12:** Will community-based organizations be competing for funds alongside non community-based organizations?

**Answer 12:** Only if they decide to apply for the general pool of funding or fail to specify that they are applying for the community-based organization set-aside (see previous question).

**Question 13:** Will the tribal set-aside be scored by the applicable EPA Region or are they all competing in one national pool?

**Answer 13:** All applications will be evaluated nationally by EPA in three separate categories – tribal set-aside, community-based organization set-aside, and general pool of applications. They will not be evaluated separately against applications submitted solely from the applicable EPA region. Please see Section V.B. on page 23 of the RFA for additional information about the evaluation process.

**Question 14:** Will community-based organizations be considered for both the carve out and for regular grants?

**Answer 14:** All applications will be evaluated nationally by EPA in three separate categories – tribal set-aside, community-based organization set-aside, and general pool of applications. As noted in Section II.A. on page 11 of the RFA, the amounts for the set-asides are approximations, and 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. Also see Section V.B. on page 23 of the RFA for additional information about the evaluation process.

**Question 15:** What is the deadline for use of the funds? Is a shorter timeframe project considered lesser than a three-year project?

**Answer 15:** See Section II.D. on page 12 of the RFA. Project can be no more than three years from the date of award. Projects may be for less than three years. Funds are expected to be expended by the end date of the award.

**Question 16:** Is there an in-service time requirement for sensors installed with grant funds? For example, should low quality sensors fail within 6 months of the finalization of the project, would applicants be required to replace and maintain those sensors? If so, what is the in-service time requirement?

**Answer 16:** There is not a specific in-service time requirement. It is up to the applicant to determine what is most applicable for their proposed project, consistent with Section II.B and other requirements of the RFA.

**Question 17:** If our organization is eligible for the community-based set-aside, is it more advantageous us to apply for the community-based set-aside or the larger pot of funding?

**Answer 17:** We cannot comment or speculate as to what pot of money is more advantageous to apply for. All applications will be evaluated nationally by EPA in three separate categories – tribal set-aside, community-based organization set-aside, and general pool of applications. As noted in Section II.A. on page 11 of the RFA, the amounts for the set-asides are approximations, and 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. Also see Section V.B. on page 23 of the RFA for additional information about the evaluation process.

**Question 18:** The RFA states that “Applicants can submit a total of two (2) applications overall under this solicitation.” The RFA also encourages partnership letters. If we submit a partnership letter to another organization in support of their proposal, but do not receive any funding from their award, will that prevent our organization from submitting a total of two (2) applications on our own? In other words, does a partnership letter count as one application for this solicitation?

**Answer 18:** The two application limit only applies to the number of applications an eligible entity directly submits to EPA under this competition. Being a partner on another entity’s application does not count towards this limit.

**Question 19:** Was the intent to apply an optional document that is not a requirement or will impede on our application process?

**Answer 19:** Correct, the intent to apply is optional and will not impede your application. Additionally, you may still send us an intent to apply.

## II. Funding

**Question 1:** How much money is EPA giving out from this RFA (See Section II.B. on page 11 of the RFA)?

**Answer 1:** The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$20,000,000. Approximately \$2 million of this amount will be awarded to tribal governments under a tribal government set-aside under which only applications from tribal governments will be considered, and approximately \$2 million will be awarded to community-based organizations under a community-based organization set-aside under which only applications from community-based organizations will be considered. The amounts for the set-asides are approximations, and 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.

**Question 2:** Is this one-time money?

**Answer 2:** Yes, these grants are part of the American Rescue Plan and will be distributed as competitive grants

**Question 3:** How many assistance agreements/grants does EPA expect to award (See Section II.C. on page 12 of the RFA)?

**Answer 3:**

- Overall, EPA anticipates awarding a total of approximately 50-70 assistance agreements (cooperative agreements or grants), subject to availability of funds, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.
- EPA anticipates awarding approximately 20-30 assistance agreements ranging in value from \$25,000 to \$100,000 (*i.e.*, “Small Grants”) and 30-40 assistance agreements ranging in value from \$100,001 to \$500,000 (*i.e.*, “Large Grants”).
- EPA may increase or decrease the total funding or set-aside amounts based on the number of meritorious applications received, agency priorities, funding availability, and other applicable considerations.

**Question 4:** Will the grant money need to be matched (See Section III.B. on page 14 of the RFA)?

**Answer 4:** No. There are no cost sharing/matching funds or leveraged resources required as a condition of eligibility under this competition. The money is being awarded under section 103 of the Clean Air Act, which has no cost share requirements.

**Question 5:** What can this money be used for (See Section I.B. beginning on page 5 and Sections III.C.-D. beginning on page 14 of the RFA)?

**Answer 5:** This funding can be used for ambient air monitoring projects and costs associated with those projects, including personnel.

**Question 6:** How many applications can be submitted by an organization (See Section III.D.2.b.-c. on page 17)?

**Answer 6:** No more than 2 applications. The applications limit is tied to the Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. DUNS) and SAM registration of the eligible entity. The Unique Entity Identifier and SAM registration is explained further in Appendix A of the RFA.

**Question 7:** Can a single agency submit more than 2 proposals if the proposals are from different divisions of the agency?

**Answer 7:** The application limit is tied to the Unique Entity Identifier of the organization registered with SAM.gov as described in Appendix A of this competition. Based on the nature of this competition, it was determined that eligible entities can submit no more than two applications per registered entity.

**Question 8:** Is it permissible for an applicant to be a lead applicant on one EPA grant and a sub-applicant on another EPA grant, or a sub-applicant on multiple? Does this impact the maximum amount of applications an eligible entity can submit?

**Answer 8:** This is allowed. The application limit is tied to the Unique Entity Identifier of the organization registered with SAM.gov as described in Appendix A of this competition. Being a partner/sub-grantee on an application does not count towards the application limit of an eligible entity.

**Question 9:** Can a single organization receive multiple grants from EPA with overlapping project periods?

**Answer 9:** It is ok for a single organization to have multiple grants from EPA with overlapping project periods, as long as they do not include the same costs under more than one grant, as required under 2 CFR 200.306(b)(5) and 200.403(f) (see page 17 of the RFA).

**Question 10:** Can a community-based nonprofit applying in the community-based set aside category apply for more than \$100,000?

**Answer 10:** The \$500,000 maximum per application mentioned on pages 12 and 15 applies to any application – whether applying for a set-aside or not.

### III. Administrative, including contents of applications

**Question 1:** Is this grant program reimbursement-based? If so, are advance payments possible?

**Answer 1:** For non-state entities, please see the “Proper Payment Drawdown (for recipients other than states)” on page 3 of EPA’s General Terms and Conditions ([https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/fy\\_2022\\_epa\\_general\\_terms\\_and\\_conditions\\_effective\\_october\\_1\\_2021.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/fy_2022_epa_general_terms_and_conditions_effective_october_1_2021.pdf)). Entities can receive advance payments based on the requirements below. This file is also accessible through Section I.F. on page 11 of the RFA, under the last clause of the EPA Solicitation Clauses. States have to follow the payments requirements under 2 CFR 200.305(a).

#### **Proper Payment Drawdown (for recipients other than states)**

- a. As required by 2 CFR 200.305(b), the recipient must draw funds from ASAP only for the minimum amounts needed for actual and immediate cash requirements to pay employees, contractors, subrecipients or to satisfy other obligations for allowable costs under this assistance agreement. The timing and amounts of the drawdowns must be as close as administratively feasible to actual disbursements of EPA funds. Disbursement within 5 business days of drawdown will comply with this requirement and the recipient agrees to meet this standard when performing this award.
- b. Recipients may not retain more than 5% of the amount drawn down, or \$1,000 whichever is less, 5 business days after drawdown to materially comply with the standard. Any EPA funds subject to this

paragraph that remain undisbursed after 5 business days must be fully disbursed within 15 business days of draw down or be returned to EPA.

c. If the recipient draws down EPA funds in excess of that allowed by paragraph b., the recipient must contact [rtpfc-grants@epa.gov](mailto:rtpfc-grants@epa.gov) for instructions on whether to return the funds to EPA. Recipients must comply with the requirements at 2 CFR 200.305(b)(8) and (9) regarding depositing advances of Federal funds in interest bearing accounts.

d. Information on how to repay EPA via check is available at <https://www.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>. Instructions on how to return funds to EPA electronically via ASAP are available at <https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/asap/>

e. Failure on the part of the recipient to materially comply with this condition may, in addition to EPA recovery of the un-disbursed portions of the drawn down funds, lead to changing the payment method from advance payment to a reimbursable basis. EPA may also take other remedies for noncompliance under 2 CFR 200.208 and/or 2 CFR 200.339.

f. If the recipient believes that there are extraordinary circumstances that prevent it from complying with the 5- business day disbursement requirement throughout the performance period of this agreement, recipients may request an exception to the requirement by following the procedures specified in RAIN-2018-G06-R (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g06-r>). EPA will grant exceptions to the 5-business day disbursement requirement only if the recipient demonstrates that compliance places an undue administrative or financial management burden or EPA determines that granting the exception is in the public interest.

**Question 2:** If partner agencies are contributing technical assistance to the grant applicant/recipient, but are not receiving a subaward, may they be listed in the "key staff" / "curriculum vitae" section?

**Answer 2:** Any individuals that will work on the project who the applicant considers to be "key personnel" can be included when addressing Criterion 6.C. (See page 36 of the RFA). This may include submitting resumes as described in Section IV.C.3. on page 19.

**Question 3:** Does the project narrative include a logic model and timeline within the 12-page limit? What about maps & graphs from EJ screen, US Census SVI, and city and state environmental justice mapping?

**Answer 3:** Any documentation you think is necessary to respond to the evaluation criteria – with the exception of the attachments noted under Section IV.C.3. on page 19 of the RFA – count towards the 12-page limit. The project narrative should include outputs, outcomes, and performance measures as noted in Criterion 4 on page 21 and described further beginning on page 34 of the RFA. The other attachments that do not count towards the 12-page limit are:

- Quality Assurance Statement
- Proof of Nonprofit Status
- Community-based Organization Documentation
- Partnership Letters
- Resumes of the Project Manager and Other Key Personnel

**Question 4:** Do the mandatory forms count as part of the 12 pages? Does length of attachments count towards the 12-page limit?



**Answer 4:** The mandatory forms do not count as part of the 12-page limit. Any documentation you think is necessary to respond to the evaluation criteria – with the exception of the attachments noted under Section IV.C.3. on page 19 of the RFA – count towards the 12-page limit. The length of the attachments does not count towards the 12-page limit, but the quality assurance statement and resumes should be 2 pages or less.

**Question 5:** Are citations included within the 12-page application limit?

**Answer 5:** Any documentation you think is necessary to respond to the evaluation criteria – with the exception of the attachments noted under Section IV.C.3. on page 19 of the RFA – count towards the 12-page limit. Citations and references are not required, but if you think citations or references are necessary for your application to address the requested information for the project narrative (see Appendix B of the RFA), then you should include them and they will be counted towards the 12-page limit of the project narrative.

**Question 6:** Are "Project Team Biographies" the same as resumes?

**Answer 6:** Yes, "project team biographies" are generally the same as the Resume attachment mentioned in Section IV.C.3. on page 19 of the RFA.

**Question 7:** Is there a font size requirement?

**Answer 7:** See Section IV.C.2. on page 18 of the RFA: "Additionally, the project narrative should be in a legible font (e.g., size 12 Times New Roman font, size 11 Calibri font, etc); smaller font sizes may be used for tables and figures" as well as references.

**Question 8:** If there continue to be new Covid variants, supply-chain shortages and staffing issues over the next few years that could delay projects, will those be considered as reasons for extensions of the project period, or would that not fall under extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances?

**Answer 8:** Awarded grants can be given no-cost extensions due to unforeseen circumstances that arise during the grant's project period that impacts the timeliness of completing the project. This can be due to unforeseen issues related to COVID. Whether an extension is needed is determined on a case-by-case basis and closer to the original project's end date.

**Question 9:** Can you explain in more detail the difference between a cooperative agreement and a grant?

**Answer 9:** From the definition of "cooperative agreement" under [2 CFR 200.1](#): a cooperative agreement "Is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement of the Federal awarding agency in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award." As noted in this RFA under Section II.E. on pages 12-13:

Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA project officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:

- Close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- Collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- EPA prior review or approval of project phases or the substantive provisions of proposed contracts or subawards found within the scope of the cooperative agreement;

- EPA approval of a quality assurance project plan prior to issuing an award that involves environmental data collection, production, or use.
- Approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- Review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

A grant is generally the same funding mechanism as a cooperative agreement but without the substantial involvement detailed above.

**Question 10:** When is the projected start date for projects that receive funding?

**Answer 10:** The projected start date is estimated to begin by November 2022 (see Section II.D. on page 12 of the RFA). However, this date is tied to when the grants are awarded, which will be approximately two months after the applications are selected for funding.

**Question 11:** What is the difference between the award date and the beginning of the project period?

**Answer 11:** The award date is generally the same as the start date and is at least two months after applicants are notified whether they have been selected for an award. Page 1 of the RFA states this will be between October and November of 2022. The beginning of the project period, also known as the start date, is generally about two months after the award date.

**Question 12:** In the evaluation criteria, the total points for the community-based organization set-aside is 135. Are applications evaluated across all categories (community-based set-aside and non-community-based) meaning that a community-based project is more favorable since you can earn more points than a non-community-based project?

**Answer 12:** Please see Section II.A. on page 11 and Section V.B. on page 23 regarding the evaluation of the set-asides. These applications will be reviewed and evaluated within their applicable set-aside. However, we can adjust the total amount of money awarded under the set-asides based on the number of meritorious applications received, agency priorities, funding availability, and other applicable considerations. This does not mean that applications in the community-based organization set-aside will be rated more favorable because they can earn more total points.

**Question 13:** Can organizations propose the outputs, outcomes, and performance measures that best capture the goals of their own project and workplan, in alignment with the EPA Strategic Plan? Or are there specific requirements for these which are determined by the EPA (e.g., a requirement to track number of individuals reached, requirement to engage in a specific number of community listening sessions, etc.)?

**Answer 13:** The outputs and outcomes in the RFA are examples, and you should propose the ones applicable to your project. Appendix B on pages 34-35 has additional guidance on what to include for the evaluation of this criterion. If selected for funding, your grant will have to include outputs and outcomes, which may be negotiated with EPA before award.

**Question 14:** Following award, do regional partners assist the grantee in sub-award contract selection and instrumentation?

**Answer 14:** As mentioned in the evaluation criteria and Section 2 of Appendix B, applicants must explain how community partners and supporting organizations will participate in the design and performance of the project, and/or allow the applicant to more effectively perform the project. Following award, EPA is not

involved in the selection of contractors or sub-grantees. See [EPA's Subaward Policy](#) and [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#).

**Question 15:** Is this program subject to Executive Order 12372?

**Answer 15:** This program is not subject to EO 12372.

**Question 16:** How does the Quality Assurance Statement Attachment differ from the Quality Assurance Statement in the body of the application?

**Answer 16:** Applicants may submit their Quality Assurance Statement using the Other Attachment Form in Grants.gov or include the Quality Assurance Statement in the Project Narrative. Using the Other Attachment Form, however, does not count towards the 12-page limit. The Quality Assurance Statement mentioned on page 19 of the RFA is the same as the one described on page 35.

**Question 17:** Could you distinguish between Quality Assurance Statements and Quality Assurance plans?

**Answer 17:** EPA will evaluate Quality Assurance Statements according to criterion 5 of Section V.A. of the RFA; additional details are available in Section 5 of Appendix B. Quality Assurance Project Plans are not required by applicants submitting under this RFA; however, as mentioned in Appendix B, a full quality assurance project plan will be required prior to the award of selected projects for assistance agreements that involve environmental data collection, production, or use.

**Question 18:** Is there specific language that needs to be included in the Quality Assurance Statement?

**Answer 18:** There is not specific language that needs to be included. EPA will evaluate Quality Assurance Statements according to criterion 5 of Section V.A. of the RFA; additional details are available in Section 5 of Appendix B.

**Question 19:** Could you share examples of demonstrating "effective community-based representation/impact"?

**Answer 19:** Item #6 in Section III.C. of the RFA explains the threshold eligibility criteria if applying for the community-based organization set-aside. Refer to Section 2.B. in Appendix B on page 33 of the RFA for additional guidance on how to address this criterion.

**Question 20:** Since much of the evaluation criteria is community specific, how can we include more than one project in an application?

**Answer 20:** Refer to Section 1.B. of the RFA regarding the number of applications. 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.

**Question 21:** Do all RFA participants need to register with Grants.gov or just the Principal Investigator organization?

**Answer 22:** The only entity that needs to be registered in Grants.gov is the legal entity that is submitting the application as described in Appendix A of the RFA.

**Question 22:** If using the new Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), would be placed in field '4. Applicant Identifier' field of the SF424 form in grants.gov?

**Answer 22:** No, the UEI should go in field 8.c. The form will be changing soon to label this "UEI" rather than "DUNS." Field 4. can be left blank.

**Question 23:** Is there an ID number that will identify the application through grants.gov? If so, what is it?

**Answer 23:** This gets assigned by Grants.gov when you submit your application.

**Question 24:** If you are a new grantee in a separate program that is just beginning, how does that effect our response to evaluation criterion 6 regarding past performance?

**Answer 24:** See pages 35-36 of the RFA about how to address criteria 6.a. and b. if you do not have past grant experience. This would also apply if you just received your first grant. At a minimum, you should still address these criteria to at least receive a neutral score. You can also report on grants received from other non-federal entities, if applicable.

**Question 25:** What is the micro-purchasing threshold for this grant?

**Answer 25:** The micro-purchasing thresholds are subject to 2 CFR 200.320(1)

(<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR45ddd4419ad436d/section-200.320>). It depends on the applicant, as described in this regulation.

**Question 26:** Is the budget table AND budget detail listed on page 22 of the RFA included in the 12-page limit for the project narrative?

**Answer 26:** Yes, the budget table and budget detail are part of the 12-page limit of the project narrative (see pages 36-37 of the RFA).

**Question 27:** Do we (applicant) need to identify the community partners in the application?

**Answer 27:** You do not need to identify community partners as part of your application, but be sure to read through how partnerships should be addressed in your application beginning on page 32 of the RFA.

**Question 28:** Do we need to identify the consultant or equipment/service vendor in the application?

**Answer 28:** You are not required to name contractors in your application. See the “Note” on page 2 of the RFA. It links to our additional clauses contained in grant competitions, which contains this information:

“Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the firm's role in preparing the application. For additional guidance applicants should review [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements.](#)”

**Question 29:** How can we include a contractor in the application without first going through the bid process, which cannot take place until after notification of the award?

**Answer 29:** See the “Note” on page 2 of the RFA. It links to our additional clauses contained in grant competitions, which contains this information:

“Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the

firm's role in preparing the application. For additional guidance applicants should review [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements.](#)"

**Question 30:** Under Section IV. C. 3., we are instructed to include a Quality Assurance Statement as an attachment that is not included in the 12-page limit. Under Section V.A.5., it appears the Quality Assurance Statement is being requested as part of the 12-page maximum narrative. Attachment B again refers to including it as an attachment. Should the QA Statement be included in the narrative, as an attachment, or both? Is it supporting material (attachment?) or part of the workplan?

**Answer 30:** Applicants should rely on the directions at the beginning of Section V. to follow "the content requirements set forth in Appendix B." Where noted in Appendix B, certain contents of applications do not count towards the 12-page limit, such as submitting the quality assurance statement as a separate attachment (see page 35 of the RFA). However, if an applicant includes their quality assurance statement within in the project narrative attachment form, it will count towards the 12-page limit of the project narrative.

**Question 31:** How should an applicant handle applying indirect cost rates if it had an approved indirect cost rate but it expired in 2021? In other words, is the applicant permitted to utilize its 2020 Final Rate in a 2022 Federal application if it does not formally have a 2022 Provisional Rate at this point?

**Answer 31:** You can use your expired rate for your application. However, if selected for an award, you will need to have a final indirect cost rate before you can draw down any funds from the awarded grant (see [EPA's Indirect Cost Rate Policy](#) beginning under 6.0 Policy on page 3, which is also linked at the top of page 39 in the RFA). You can also use the de minimis 10% rate if you meet the conditions described beginning on page 4 of the Indirect Cost Rate Policy. Finally, you may be able to use the expired rate following the guidance beginning on page 5 of the policy.

**Question 32:** Is a post-project audit by a CPA required by US EPA? If so, can grant funds be used to pay for the audit?

**Answer 32:** Yes, it is required in certain circumstances (see #18 on page 13, [https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/fy\\_2022\\_epa\\_general\\_terms\\_and\\_conditions\\_effective\\_october\\_1\\_2021.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/fy_2022_epa_general_terms_and_conditions_effective_october_1_2021.pdf), also accessible through Section I.F. of the RFA). Audit costs are allowable, consistent with 2 CFR 200.425 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E/subject-group-ECFRed1f39f9b3d4e72/section-200.425>).

**Question 33:** Regarding contracts included in an application, is a competitive process vs. justified sole source weighed differently?

**Answer 33:** This is not evaluated differently. The main requirement is that any contracts you plan to award meet the requirements of [2 CFR Part 200.317 or 318](#) as applicable. Be sure to review the Contracts and Subawards section of the [External Clauses](#), which are linked under Section I.F. on page 11 of the RFA.

**Question 34:** Does our project need to expend funds all three years? For example, could we request funds that go entirely to instrumentation, front loaded on the first year? Or is it paid out year by year?

**Answer 34:** As noted in Section II.E. on page 13 of the RFA, selected awards may be fully or incrementally funded, as appropriate, based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations. The timing of expenditures should be consistent with the activities and timing in the award.

While the expenditures can vary from year to year, applicants should be aware of the Unliquidated Obligations clause in [EPA's Solicitation Clauses](#):

“An applicant that receives an award under this announcement is expected to manage assistance agreement funds efficiently and effectively and make sufficient progress towards completing the project activities described in the work-plan in a timely manner. The assistance agreement will include terms/conditions implementing this requirement.”

**Question 35:** Does EPA have a list of acceptable equipment for monitoring the pollutants identified in the RFA and sources for that air monitoring equipment to help with budget details?

**Answer 35:** EPA does not currently maintain a single comprehensive list of all commercially available air quality monitors. Costs differ depending on the application and instrument. Detailed cost information is typically available from the specific instrument manufacturers. EPA's Air Sensor Toolbox website may contain additional information related to your question: <https://www.epa.gov/air-sensor-toolbox>.

Refer to Section I.B. of this RFA regarding ambient monitoring technology. Applicants should use commercially available technology and/or proven methods to monitor these air pollutants. EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA. If it is unclear to the applicant whether their desired technology meets this specification, EPA suggests that the applicant provide a clear justification demonstrating that the instrumentation is proven to monitor air pollutants of concern. Applicants should also consider whether the technology is appropriate for your proposed project, consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA.

**Question 36:** What air monitors do you typically see community organizations using?

**Answer 36:** We cannot comment on the design of projects. Refer to Section I.B. of this RFA regarding ambient monitoring technology. Applicants should use commercially available technology and/or proven methods to monitor these air pollutants. EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA. If it is unclear to the applicant whether their desired technology meets this specification, EPA suggests that the applicant provide a clear justification demonstrating that the instrumentation is proven to monitor air pollutants of concern. Applicants should also consider whether the technology is appropriate for your proposed project, consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA.

**Question 37:** Do I need to sign into Grants.gov with Login.gov credentials?

**Answer:** Starting February 21, 2022, anyone trying to log into Grants.gov will have to use Login.gov credentials. EPA issued a new Recipient/Applicant Information Notice (RAIN) that describes this process. Please review RAIN-2022-G03, “Required Use of Login.gov to Sign in to Grants.gov” at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2022-g03>.

**Question 38:** Can we apply for a partial year of funding, such as a 1.5 year project?

**Answer 38:** Yes, it is allowed to include a partial year, if that's appropriate for your project. The main requirement is that projects are no more than three years (see Section II.D. on page 12 of the RFA).

**Question 39:** For the programmatic capability and past experience criteria, can we include past grant funding from foundations?

**Answer 39:** Yes, it is possible to include results from non-federal grants or cooperative agreements to demonstrate past performance and capability. Please see page 35 of the RFA where we state that non-federal funding can be included.

**Question 40:** Where can I find Workspace instructions?

**Answer 40:** Appendix A beginning on page 26 of the RFA provides instructions on how to apply through Grants.gov, including the link to the Workspace instructions (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>).

**Question 41:** What are allowable margins for the pages of the project narrative?

**Answer 41:** There is no specific allowable margin. As noted on page 18 of the RFA, the main requirement is that the project narrative is legible.

**Question 42:** Where can I find a Project Narrative Form?

**Answer 42:** The Project Narrative Form is one of the forms available in the funding opportunity's package on grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=336951>). However, it is generally a blank form that allows you to attach your project narrative to your application. You can attach it as a Word or pdf file. We do not have a project narrative template for applicants to complete. In developing your project narrative, be sure to follow Appendix B of the RFA closely.

**Question 43:** The RFA references an Appendix C. Where can I find Appendix C?

**Answer 43:** There is one reference to Appendix C on page 37, but this is an error. This was from a different competition EPA ran in 2021 where participant support costs are more prevalent. All of the relevant information from that appendix is covered under "[RAIN-2018-G05-R1, EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs](#)", which is linked on pages 37 and 41 of the RFA.

**Question 44:** For the Project Narrative, should the cover page include everything up to 'short project description'? And then should the remaining 11 pages of the project narrative be for the workplan which outlines the eligibility criteria in detail?

**Answer 44:** For the project narrative, be sure to read through Appendix B beginning on page 30 of the RFA. This goes through all of the sections that should be included in your project narrative, and notes where attachments can be submitted that do not count towards the 12-page limit. It generally includes the cover page plus the information you provide to address each of the evaluation criteria under Section V.A. of the RFA.

**Question 45:** Can we include an ongoing project's information in the Programmatic Capability and Past Performance section?

**Answer 45:** Yes, you can include active assistance agreements to demonstrate your past performance. However, be sure to note that some of the rating is based on your ability to complete the projects and achieve expected outputs and outcomes of these agreements. Be sure to read through Section 6 of Appendix B beginning on page 35 of the RFA.

**[UPDATED] Question 46:** Is it acceptable to use hyperlinks to outside websites in support of the application? Is it okay to use embedded hyperlinks?

**Answer 46:** Hyperlinks can be included where reasonable (such as linking to a cited source) but should not be used to avoid the page limit of the project narrative. Any documentation you think is necessary to respond to the evaluation criteria – with the exception of the attachments noted under Section IV.C.3. on page 19 of the RFA – count towards the 12-page limit. Embedded links are allowed.

**Question 47:** In Appendix B, Section 5 – Quality Assurance Statement is listed within the Workplan (and thus would contribute to the 12-page limit); however, in the Request for Applications Information Session, Quality Assurance Statement is listed at an Other Attachments (slide 35). Can you clarify where quality assurance should be included and whether, if included as an attachment, it would contribute to the 12-page limit?

**Answer 47:** It only counts towards the 12-page limit if it is submitted within your project narrative. It may be submitted as an “Other Attachment” which does not count towards the 12-page limit. See the end of the first paragraph of Section 5 of Appendix B on page 35: “(Note that this statement does not count towards the 12-page limit of the project narrative and should be submitted using the Optional Attachment form)” and Section IV.D.3. on page 19 of the RFA. The attachments listed on page 19 do not count towards the 12-page limit.

**[NEW] Question 48:** The RFA states, “An applicant’s budget table and budget narrative must account for both federal funds and any non-federal voluntary cost share, if applicable.” Does “non-federal voluntary cost sharing” mean that we need to also estimate and show expenses we’d be taking on, such as travel, salaries, etc? Further, on the cover page we’re supposed to list ‘EPA funding requested’ and ‘Total Project Budget’ separately. Is ‘Total Project Cost’ meant to include all those other costs that we are covering internally?

**Answer 48:** This grant competition does not have a cost share requirement, as noted in Section III.B. on page 14 of the RFA. However, cost share is allowed under the competition. If you propose to include cost share in your project, then you must include it in your budget as described in Appendix B, beginning on page 36 of the RFA. Also be sure to read through the [Budget Guidance](#) on the requirements of cost share before deciding whether to include cost share in your application.

**[NEW] Question 49:** What documentation do we need to submit in order to include our subaward partners’ qualifications and role in the grant application? Is a letter of commitment sufficient, or does there need to be a formal agreement? Can I include subrecipient details in the Programmatic Capability and Past Performance category, such as Past Performance and Staff Expertise?

**Answer 49:** A partnership or commitment letter is sufficient. The programmatic capability and past performance criteria are based solely on the applicant submitting an application in response to this grant competition. However, consistent with the Contracts and Subawards clause on page 4 of the [Solicitation Clauses](#) (linked on page 11 of the RFA), named subrecipients can be considered under other evaluation criteria.

**[NEW] Question 50:** Where should the subaward costs and fringe benefits for partners be placed within the budget?

**Answer 50:** All subaward costs go in the “Other” budget category. See the description of “Other” on page 39 of the RFA for additional details.

**[NEW] Question 51:** Can we embed a screenshot of an Excel timeline, map and legend, and photo in our 12-page narrative, to supplement the text, as long as we stay within the 12-page limit?



**Answer 51:** You may embed pictures and screenshots into your project narrative. The main requirement is that it is legible (see Section IV.C.2. on page 18 of the RFA).

**[NEW] Question 52:** Question 15 (Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project) of Form SF-424 asks for an attachment. It is not clear to me from the RFA what attachment this should be. Can you clarify?

**Answer 52:** There are no attachments that you need to include for this answer in the SF-424. Page 27 of the RFA specifies the files and attachments that you should include in your grant application. This link provides additional instructions for the SF-424 and 424A (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>)

**[NEW] Question 53:** For the SF-424 document, which identifier is called for in Box 4 “Application Identifier” and Box 5b “Federal Award Identifier”?

**Answer 53:** You only need to fill out the fields with an asterisk. There is nothing you need to include for 4 through 5.b. The 424 and 424A instructions are available here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>.

**[NEW] Question 54:** For the SF-424A, what do the terms "Grant Program Function or Activity" and "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number" refer to?

**Answer 54:** For the SF-424A, “Grant Program Function or Activity” can be the name of your proposed project. The CFDA number is 66.034, which is from the first page of the RFA. CFDA is also called “assistance listing.”

**[NEW] Question 55:** For the SF-424A, is Section D “Forecasted Cash Needs” a re-statement of the balance requested in Section B?

**Answer 55:** Section B covers the total amount you are requesting. Section D covers the estimated amount you need for each quarter of the first year of your project, so section D would likely be less than Section B if you are proposing a multi-year project.

**[NEW] Question 56:** For the SF-424A, is Section E “Budget of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of Project?” a re-statement of the balance requested in Section B?

**Answer 56:** This would be the amount of funding you are requesting for each year of your project.

**[NEW] Question 57:** In filling out the form SF-424A, it seems there is no place on the form that contains the total amount being requested for the 3 years. Is there no place on form 424A to state the total amount requested?

**Answer 57:** The funding period under these grants is the entire period of your proposed project, which may be up to three years (see Section II.D. on page 12 of the RFA). Therefore, sections A and B of the SF-424A should reflect the total amount of funding you are requesting. Section D is just for the first year of your project and Section E covers the additional years, if applicable.

**[NEW] Question 58:** Where can I find additional information about registering and applying through Grants.gov?

**Answer 58:** Please review [EPA's Grants Management Training for Applicants and Recipients](#), especially Module 3.

#### IV. Allowable Activities

**Question 1:** Can any of this \$20 million be used to address toxic air pollution (See Section I.B. beginning on page 5 and Section III.C.9. on page 16 of the RFA)?

**Answer 1:** Yes, EPA is soliciting applications to conduct monitoring of pollutants of greatest concern in communities with health outcome disparities, including air toxics, also known as Hazardous Air Pollutants (current list of HAPs is available here: <https://www.epa.gov/haps/initial-list-hazardous-air-pollutants-modifications#mods>).

- The complete list of air pollutants covered by this RFA is:
  - Carbon Monoxide
  - Lead
  - Nitrogen Dioxide
  - Ozone, including ozone precursors
    - Precursors for ozone collected in the Photochemical Assessment Monitoring Stations (PAMS) Program including oxides of nitrogen, (NO, NO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>y</sub>) volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and carbonyls. A list of ozone precursors can be found in the Technical Assistance Document for Sampling and Analysis of Ozone Precursors for the Photochemical Assessment Monitoring Stations Program, Revision 2 – April 2019. This is available at: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/documents/pams\\_technical\\_assistance\\_document\\_revision\\_2\\_april\\_2019.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/documents/pams_technical_assistance_document_revision_2_april_2019.pdf)
    - Additional ozone precursors such as methane.
  - Sulfur Dioxide
  - Particle Pollution (ultrafine, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, or PM<sub>10</sub>), including aerosol composition and PM precursors
    - Aerosol composition is determined by the Chemical Speciation Network (CSN). A full list of the CSN reported parameters is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/amtic/chemical-speciation-network-parameters-reported-air-quality-system-aqs>.
    - PM precursors including ammonia, sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), oxides of nitrogen, CO, and VOCs.
  - Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs), commonly referred to as air toxics. A full list of HAPs is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/haps/initial-list-hazardous-air-pollutants-modifications#mods>.

**Question 2:** For the requirement of addressing one or more of the air pollutants, for particle pollution, "including aerosol composition and PM precursors" - does that mean if we choose PM we need to include composition and precursors or that we could look at precursors alone, for example? Or to rephrase - would monitoring with a continuous particle count monitor be acceptable?

**Answer 2:** Applicants wishing to address particle pollution (e.g., PM2.5) do not also need to address aerosol composition and/or PM precursors. Applicants wishing to address aerosol composition and/or PM precursors may select a single component and do not need to address the entire suite of pollutants.

**Question 3:** Are we able to apply for visual air monitoring of the listed pollutants, such as 24/7 or drone cameras to compliment ambient air quality monitors?

**Answer 3:** As noted in the questions/answers about allowable costs, if the costs are necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project needs to be consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting eligibility. Additionally, Applicants should use commercially available technology and/or proven methods to monitor these air pollutants. EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA, as noted on page 6 of the RFA.

Applicants should be aware that the use of small unmanned aircraft systems (“drones”) must meet the requirements of [14 CFR Part 107](#). EPA assistance agreement recipients may charge small unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) as defined at 14 CFR 107.3 to their EPA assistance agreement so long as costs are allowable and allocable. Any applicant selected for funding that includes drones in their project must agree to:

- Include the intended use of any small unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) defined at 14 CFR 107.3, also known as drones, to achieve environmental outputs and outcomes in negotiated workplans.
- Abide by all the Federal Aviation Administration regulatory requirements of 14 CFR 107 including registration, certification and training of small UAS. This includes but is not limited to recipients must complete small UAS operator training at a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved Airman Knowledge Testing Center, complete remote pilot certification (FAA Airman Certificate and/or Rating Application Form 8710-13), and complete FAA UAS registration.
- Comply with applicable procurement requirements under 2 CFR Part 200 subpart D upon determining that small UAS purchase is more cost effective than alternative options, such as: contracting small UAS services, leasing a small UAS, or documenting conditions without using a small UAS. All small UAS costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the scope of the project (2 CFR Part 200 subpart E).

**Question 4:** Can we apply to acquire sensors and directly distribute the sensors to tribal citizens, as well as provide technical assistance to them for the sensors? Is there a minimum?

**Answer 4:** Yes, eligible entities can apply for commercially available technology where performance has been documented and/or proven methods for air pollutants within scope to distribute to tribal citizens (See Section I.B. of the RFA, specifically page 6). The minimum amount an eligible applicant can apply for is \$25,000 (see number 3. on page 15 of the RFA).

**Question 5:** Are projects eligible for funding that utilize sub-Federal Reference Method (FRM)/Federal Equivalent Method (FEM) technologies (e.g., air sensors)?

**Answer 5:** The paragraph below from page 6 of the RFA, and the list of ineligible costs and activities in Section III.D. on page 17 of the RFA, are intended to prohibit funding the research, development, demonstration, or evaluation of new methods or equipment (highlighted below). FRM/FEM only apply to NAAQS, but any other commercially available technologies are allowed for NAAQS or other pollutants where performance has been documented. Applicants can provide performance validation data and other proof of performance documentation.

Examples of commercially available equipment could include, but are not limited to, instruments designated as federal reference or equivalent methods, air sensors, or air toxics samplers.

### **Air Monitoring Technology (from page 6 of the RFA)**

To provide timely air quality information in communities, applicants should use commercially available technology and/or proven methods to monitor these air pollutants. For example, projects must utilize commercially available air quality monitoring equipment (e.g., a continuous PM2.5 monitor), EPA procedures (e.g., EPA's Compendium of Methods for the Determination of Toxic Organic Compounds in Ambient Air), and/or other air quality methods that have been previously researched and documented in literature. EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA.

**Question 6:** Is the RFA requesting projects that build a solution to monitoring, or is it just monitoring your community?

**Answer 6:** These grants are for enhancing air quality monitoring in communities. Eligible activities need to be within scope of Section I.B. beginning on page 5 of the RFA. Specifically:

"EPA is soliciting applications from eligible entities, as described in Section III.A., for projects designed to monitor air pollutants of greatest concern in communities with disproportionate and adverse health outcomes. 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."

Additionally, it is for using existing monitoring technology to expand/enhance the air monitoring in communities. Examples of commercially available equipment could include, but are not limited to, instruments designated as federal reference or equivalent methods, air sensors, or air toxics samplers. (See Answer 3 above).

**Question 7:** Multiple questions related to eligible activities:

- Can this grant be used to support public workshops, dialogue, and engagement with, for example, local artists and cultural conveners who can work with the public to understand and make locally relevant meanings from data during the project?
- Can the funding be used for producing air quality information through modeling?
- Can we cover the cost of lab equipment to analyze samples with the grant?
- Can we cover the cost of calibration support costs?
- Can we include operation and maintenance costs?
- Can we include training on the use of technology?
- Can we include indoor air monitoring?
- Can we include air monitoring data assessment?

- Can we include air quality web service/application?
- Can the funding be used for weather sensors, and/or mixing layer ceilometers?
- Can the funding include educating the community about air quality and Environmental Justice?
- Can we conduct research of behavioral changes to lessen impact of air quality, like phone app alerts, mass phone calling?
- Can we evaluate health outcomes?
- Can our project include community air monitoring during emergency response incidents?
- Can our project include analysis of satellite data?
- Can our project include soil vapor testing?
- Can our project include mitigation through education and outreach related to the data we generate?

**Answer 7:** As stated on page 1 of the RFA, EPA is soliciting applications from 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 pollutant scope under the RFA is described starting on page 5 of the RFA. Assuming the primary activities of your proposed project are for ambient air measurements of one or more of these pollutants and the proposed project meets the other requirements identified under the RFA (such as the costs are necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project needs to be consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA) grant funds may be used for:

- public workshops, community engagement, and other costs
- producing air quality information through modeling
- lab equipment
- calibration support costs
- operation and maintenance costs
- training on use of technology
- indoor air monitoring
- air monitoring data assessment
- air quality web service/application
- weather sensors, and/or mixing layer ceilometers
- educating the community about air quality and Environmental Justice
- community engagement
- evaluating health outcomes
- community air monitoring during emergency response incidents
- analysis of satellite data
- soil vapor testing
- education and outreach related to generated data

Refer to Section I.B. Scope of Work, Section III.D. Ineligible Activities, Section V.A. Evaluation Criteria, and Appendix B Appendix B - Project Narrative Instructions, Format, and Content for additional guidance on what to include in your proposed project. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting allowability.

**Question 8:** Can these funds be used for soil cleanups if the soil contamination was caused by air pollution?

**Answer 8:** Soil cleanups are not eligible for funding under this competition. (see Section I.B. of the RFA). This competition is “for projects designed to monitor air pollutants of greatest concern in communities with disproportionate and adverse health outcomes.”

**Question 9:** Can funding be used to purchase air cleaners as well as monitors for inside/outside monitoring in schools or community centers?

**Answer 9:** Purchasing air cleaners is outside the scope of EPA's statutory authority for this grant. Funding under this competition is authorized under Section 103 of the Clean Air Act. Under Clean Air Act Section 103, we are authorized to fund activities related to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, and control of air pollution. Refer to Section I.D. of the RFA for additional information. As stated on page 1 of the RFA and later elaborated in the Scope of Work beginning on page 5, EPA is soliciting applications from 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.

**Question 10:** If it makes sense based on State Implementation Plans (SIPs) indices to establish new PAMS stationing for criteria pollutants, identification of transport zones, and patterning, would EPA fund this goal?

**Answer 10:** Implementation Plans (SIPs) themselves are outside the scope of the RFA; however, EPA acknowledges that information included in EPA-approved SIPs may be useful for some applicants in identifying locations and/or pollutants of concern. Applications proposing 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, including monitoring the transport of air pollution, may be funded under this grant assuming that they meet the requirements outlined in the RFA. Grant funding may be used to monitor ozone precursors, as noted on pages 5-6 of the RFA.

**Question 11:** What pollutants are of most interest to the EPA?

**Answer 11:** The RFA is for funding to monitor the air pollutants of greatest concern in communities, as noted in the text from page 5 of the RFA. The eligible pollutants to monitor are listed above in Answer 14 of the General Questions.

**Question 12:** Is Ethylene Oxide considered a VOC for this specific grant?

**Answer 12:** Yes, projects can include ethylene oxide under this competition. Please see the "Pollutant Scope" on pages 5-6 of the RFA. Ethylene oxide is one of the listed hazardous air pollutants at <https://www.epa.gov/haps/initial-list-hazardous-air-pollutants-modifications#mods>.

**Question 13:** Are these funds available for black carbon and ultra-fine particle (UFP) monitoring, or will EPA reject proposals for black carbon and UFP monitoring?

**Answer 13:** Black carbon and ultrafine particle pollution monitoring is allowed. Under this competition projects can include Particle Pollution (ultrafine, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, or PM<sub>10</sub>), including aerosol composition and PM precursors. Please see the "Pollutant Scope" section on pages 5-6 of the RFA (attached for reference) for more detail, as well as Question 14 on pages 4-5 of this document.

**Question 14:** If an air monitoring network is already considered by EPA to be over-monitored, would EPA approve another monitor in that network if community members want an additional monitor?

**Answer 14:** Applicants may submit proposals for enhanced air quality monitoring in communities (see criteria identified in Section V.A. of the RFA), including areas with existing monitoring.

**Question 15:** Can I apply for new equipment for an existing project?

**Answer 15:** Assuming the primary activities of your proposed project are for ambient air measurements of one or more of the pollutants listed on page 5 of the RFA and the proposed project meets the other requirements identified under the RFA (such as the costs are necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project needs to be consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA) grant funds may be used to expand an existing project.

Refer to Section I.B. Scope of Work, Section III.D. Ineligible Activities, Section V.A. Evaluation Criteria, and Appendix B Appendix B - Project Narrative Instructions, Format, and Content for additional guidance on what to include in your proposed project. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting eligibility.

**Question 16:** What does EPA envision for the placement of the devices for accurate information?

**Answer 16:** We cannot answer questions regarding the design of your project, including location of devices. However, as noted on page 30 of the RFA, you should identify the: “Project Location: List the primary location(s) where the benefits of the project will be realized (including community/neighborhood(s), city, state, and zip code).”

**Question 17:** Is Hydrogen Sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) an eligible air pollutant to address under this competition?

**Answer 17:** Hydrogen sulfide is an eligible pollutant to address as a precursor to SO<sub>2</sub>.

**Question 18:** Does EPA expect all of the pollutants covered by the RFA to be monitored? For example, the last bullet on the list, Hazardous Air Pollutants, covers 188 chemicals.

**Answer 18:** No, the requirement is that applications address at least one of the listed pollutants on pages 5-6 of the RFA. From page 5 (emphasis added): “To be considered for funding under this RFA, each application must address **at least one of the following...**”

**Question 19:** Multiple questions on allowable technology:

- Does EPA have a list of recommended monitors for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>?
- Is the Picarro technology of air monitoring a currently accepted technology for the purposes of this grant funding?
- Is there a list of accepted VOC monitors?
- Is there a list or source for air quality monitoring methods or accepted technology?
- Are there any that would disqualify an applicant?
- Can you expand on the requirement for commercial sensor systems. Most sensing systems built by research teams use the same internal sensors as commercial devices. Where teams have built and deployed and evaluated such sensors, are they acceptable? Or do they have to be formally listed at an EPA (or a well-known sensor evaluation institution)?
- Is the funding for currently existing air sensors that are authorized for regulatory decision-making/enforcement or air sensors that only meet the threshold for education/analysis or either?
- Can FLIR cameras be used?
- Can air monitoring park bench stations be used?
- Are portable/mobile sensors eligible?

**Answer 19:** EPA does not maintain a list nor endorse any particular commercially available air quality monitor for the purposes of this grant. Online resources that applicants may find useful include, but are not limited to, EPA’s Ambient Monitoring Technology Information Center <https://www.epa.gov/amtic> and EPA’s Air Sensor Toolbox <https://www.epa.gov/air-sensor-toolbox>.

Refer to Section I.B. of this RFA regarding ambient monitoring technology. Applicants should use commercially available technology and/or proven methods to monitor these air pollutants. EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA. If it is unclear to the applicant whether their desired technology meets this specification, EPA suggests that the applicant provide a clear justification demonstrating that the instrumentation is proven to monitor air pollutants of concern. Applicants should also consider whether the technology is appropriate for your proposed project, consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA.

**Question 20:** The EPA procedures linked to on page 6 were compiled in 1999. Are present-day commercially available continuous PM monitoring devices allowable, especially for community engagement/educational work linked to the project? Are there examples of more cost-accessible devices which would meet grant requirements, for example those reviewed by [aqmd.gov](http://aqmd.gov)?

**Answer 20:** Continuous PM monitoring devices and other “cost-accessible devices” may be permissible assuming they meet the requirements identified under the RFA’s scope of work. Refer to Section I.B. of this RFA regarding ambient monitoring technology. Applicants should use commercially available technology and/or proven methods to monitor these air pollutants. EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA. If it is unclear to the applicant whether their desired technology meets this specification, EPA suggests that the applicant provide a clear justification demonstrating that the instrumentation is proven to monitor air pollutants of concern. Applicants should also consider whether the technology is appropriate for your proposed project, consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA.

**Question 22:** Would it be better for community groups to apply using a project with fewer high-quality monitors (which usually cost more) or more lower quality monitors (which could likely facilitate greater community involvement)?

**Answer 21:** We cannot comment on the design of a proposed project. Numerous “high quality monitors” and “lower quality monitors” may be permissible assuming they meet the requirements identified under the RFA’s scope of work. Refer to Section I.B. of this RFA regarding ambient monitoring technology. Applicants should use commercially available technology and/or proven methods to monitor these air pollutants. EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA. If it is unclear to the applicant whether their desired technology meets this specification, EPA suggests that the applicant provide a clear justification demonstrating that the instrumentation is proven to monitor air pollutants of concern. Applicants should also consider whether the technology is appropriate for your proposed project, consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA.

**Question 22:** Will there be a qualification guide to determine which devices are accurate enough to give reliable project results?

**Answer 22:** EPA does not have a qualification guide for monitoring devices. Section I.B. on page 8 of the RFA states that “Each application must describe the approaches needed to successfully complete the research project and obtain documented quality data. Additionally, the applicant must also identify and document the activities that will ensure that the product is of adequate quality to be used as planned. EPA will evaluate the applicant’s quality assurance and quality control practices under criterion 5 of Section V.A. of this RFA.” Grant recipients are required to implement quality assurance and quality control practices that will be applied during the project to ensure that the results obtained satisfy the project objectives. Additionally, a full Quality Assurance Project Plan will be required prior to award of an assistance agreement that involves environmental data collection, production, or use.



**Question 23:** Are woodstove changeouts an allowable expense?

**Answer 23:** No, woodstove changeouts are not an allowable expense.

**Question 24:** With lead being listed as an eligible pollutant on page 5 of the RFA, does that mean we can conduct projects testing lead paint?

**Answer 24:** Testing lead paint is outside the scope of this competition. Lead is one of the criteria pollutants that has National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) as required by the Clean Air Act. As stated on page 1 of the RFA, EPA is soliciting applications from 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 pollutant scope under the RFA is described starting on page 5 of the RFA, including lead. The pollutant scope is for the ambient air monitoring of these pollutants.

**Question 25:** I have concerns about installing air sensors at the required distance from obstructions and making sure that they follow other potential temperature control requirements. What resources are available for me?

**Answer 25:** Please visit EPA's Air Sensor Toolbox (<https://www.epa.gov/air-sensor-toolbox>) for considerations on using sensors, especially "A Guide to Siting and Installing Air Sensors" (<https://www.epa.gov/air-sensor-toolbox/guide-siting-and-installing-air-sensors>).

**Question 26:** Is an existing air quality monitoring program which is already in operation eligible for grant funding for its continued operation? If the answer is yes, how does that effect the requirements of Section IV.D. of the additional EPA Solicitation Clauses where contracts have already been awarded to consultants for supply/operation of equipment and data collection/analysis?

**Answer 26:** This is allowed, if the monitoring is consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA. Additionally, if the existing monitoring is funded with another federal grant, be aware that your grant application cannot include costs "that are included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally financed grant, as required under 2 CFR 200.306(b)(5) and 200.403(f)." See 1.c. on page 17 of the RFA.

The procurement would still be subject to 2 CFR Part 200's procurement standards under 2 CFR 200.317 through 327. Also see [EPA's Best Practices for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment under EPA Assistance Agreements](#), which links directly to these sections of 2 CFR Part 200. Depending on when your contract for this work ends, you may need to re-compete it, consistent with the Procurement Standards.

## V. Allowable Costs

**Question 1:** Can funds be used to hire outside contractors to conduct air quality assessments?

**Answer 1:** Yes, these costs are allowed if the costs are necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project is consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA and the "Note" on page 2 regarding naming contractors or subrecipients in your application. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting allowability of costs.

**Question 2:** Are staff salaries an allowable expense? Are labor costs to hire and pay an air quality specialist to purchase monitoring equipment and collect air quality data during the grant performance period allowable costs?

**Answer 2:** Yes, these costs are allowed if the costs are necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project is consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting eligibility.

**Question 3:** Is it allowed to have contract labor versus personnel?

**Answer 3:** Yes, these costs are allowed if the costs are necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project is consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA and the “Note” on page 2 regarding naming contractors or subrecipients in your application. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting allowability of costs.

**Question 4:** Is there a max overhead rate (for admin)?

**Answer 4:** No, there is not a maximum overhead rate for this competition. The only funding cap is on consultants (see page 4 of [https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/fy\\_2022\\_epa\\_general\\_terms\\_and\\_conditions\\_effective\\_october\\_1\\_2021.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/fy_2022_epa_general_terms_and_conditions_effective_october_1_2021.pdf)) However, as noted in the previous answers, any proposed costs need to be necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project needs to be consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting allowability of costs. Also, be sure to read through Appendix B of the RFA, specifically Section 7 – Budget, beginning on page 36.

**Question 5:** Is there any specification on what percentage of funding can go to what?

**Answer 5:** No, as noted in the previous answers, any proposed costs need to be necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project needs to be consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting allowability of costs. Also, be sure to read through Appendix B of the RFA, specifically Section 7 – Budget, beginning on page 36.

**Question 6:** Is there a limit on equipment costs?

**Answer 6:** No, as noted in the previous answers, any proposed costs need to be necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project needs to be consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting allowability of costs. Also, be sure to read through Appendix B of the RFA, specifically Section 7 – Budget, beginning on page 36.

**Question 7:** Are payments to community members for their participation in a project an eligible expense?

**Answer 7:** It depends on the nature of the payments and whether the project is consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA. Be sure to review EPA’s Guidance on Participant Support Costs (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2018-g05-r1>) for guidance on allowable payments, which are considered “participant support costs.” This guidance is also referenced on page 41 of the RFA.

**Question 8:** Can a for-profit help a community develop their proposal?

**Answer 8:** An eligible entity can have a for-profit assist with developing their proposal. However, only the legal eligible entity can submit the proposal, as described in Appendix A of the RFA.

**Question 9:** If we propose consultant/contractor support in our application, are we required to select the specific consultant/contractor through a competitive bidding process? If a consultant/contractor has a unique set of skills, can a sole source justification be provided in lieu of a competitive bidding process?

**Answer 9:** Review the Contracts and Subawards section of the “Additional Provisions” that are linked under Section I.F. on page 11 of the RFA (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>).

“Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1>). Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the firm's role in preparing the application. For additional guidance applicants should review EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/best-practice-guide-procuring-services-supplies-and-equipment-under-epa-assistance>).”

**Question 10:** Is there a monetary cap under this solicitation for the portion of the awarded funds that a primary eligible applicant can distribute to the consultants/contractors for goods and services?

**Answer 10:** Yes, there is a consultant cap. This is from EPA’s General Terms and Conditions ([https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/fy\\_2022\\_epa\\_general\\_terms\\_and\\_conditions\\_effective\\_october\\_1\\_2021.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/fy_2022_epa_general_terms_and_conditions_effective_october_1_2021.pdf)):

7. Consultant Cap EPA participation in the salary rate (excluding overhead) paid to individual consultants retained by recipients or by a recipient's contractors or subcontractors shall be limited to the maximum daily rate for a Level IV of the Executive Schedule, available at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>, to be adjusted annually. This limit applies to consultation services of designated individuals with specialized skills who are paid at a daily or hourly rate. This rate does not include transportation and subsistence costs for travel performed (the recipient will pay these in accordance with their normal travel reimbursement practices).

Information on how to calculate the maximum daily rate and the daily pay limitation is available at the Office Of Personnel Management’s Fact Sheet: How to Compute Rates of Pay (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/how-to-compute-rates-of-pay/>) and Fact Sheet: Expert and Consultant Pay (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/expert-and-consultant-pay/>). Specifically, to determine the maximum daily rate, follow these steps:

- a. Divide the Level IV salary by 2087 to determine the hourly rate. Rates must be rounded to the nearest cent, counting one-half cent and over as the next higher cent (e.g., round \$18.845 to \$18.85).
- b. Multiply the hourly rate by 8 hours. The product is the maximum daily rate.

Contracts and subcontracts with firms for services that are awarded using the procurement requirements in Subpart D of 2 CFR Part 200 are not affected by this limitation unless the terms of the contract provide the recipient with responsibility for the selection, direction and control of the individuals who will be providing services under the contract at an hourly or daily rate of

compensation. See 2 CFR 1500.10 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-B/chapter-XV/part-1500/subpart-D/subject-group-ECFR91e19bb476f6a08/section-1500.10>).

**Question 11:** Are activities outside of the United States and its territories eligible for this grant competition?

**Answer 11:** Activities outside of the United States are not authorized under this grant competition. This funding is being made available through the American Rescue Plan (P.L. 117-2). Additionally, the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) §102(2)(F), which authorizes EPA to fund international activities, is **not** one of the authorities for this grant competition.

**Question 12:** Is it an allowable participant support cost to provide a stipend or incentive purely for the time that a member of the public spends in a meeting, or doing another project activity?

**Answer 12:** This is allowed, as long the costs are consistent with #2 in the Participant Support Guidance on pages 1-2 (<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/documents/epa-guidance-on-participant-support-costs.pdf>). This includes whether the costs are necessary and reasonable to carry out your proposed project, consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA.

**Question 13:** Can grant funds be used to pay for our nonprofit's liability and directors' and officers' insurance for the term of the project?

**Answer 13:** These would likely be covered under your indirect cost rate. See <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/appendix-Appendix%20IV%20to%20Part%20200>.

**Question 14:** Can grant funding be used to hire an undergraduate or graduate student intern on a part-time basis to help our nonprofit board administer the project? Can the intern be paid as a contractor, receiving an IRS 1099?

**Answer 14:** Yes, personnel or contract costs can be included in your application as long as the costs are necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project is consistent with Section I.A. of the RFA and the "Note" on page 2 regarding naming contractors or subrecipients in your application. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting allowability of costs.

**Question 15:** Per page 35 of the RFA: "Note: As detailed in 2 CFR §1500.12, a full quality assurance project plan will be required prior to award of an assistance agreement that involves environmental data collection, production, or use." Can grant funds awarded under this competition be used to modify an existing QAPP or draft a new one?

**Answer 15:** Yes, a grant recipient can charge the grant to revise their QAPP if the previously approved QAPP is not sufficient for the new grant. They can use pre-award costs to create their QAPP; however, as with all pre-award costs, they do so at their own risk. 2 CFR 1500.9 allows for pre-award costs up to 90 days before award. Anything more than that requires EPA approval.

**Question 16:** Is there a preference for outright equipment ownership or is sensing-as-a-service accepted?

**Answer 16:** The RFA does not specify a preference on how to obtain eligible equipment. Either method can be allowed, as long as the costs are necessary and reasonable for the performance of your proposed project, and your proposed project is consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA and the "Note" on page 2 regarding naming

contractors or subrecipients in your application. See [2 CFR 200.403](#) for more information about factors affecting allowability of costs.

**Question 17:** Does this opportunity support air quality monitoring efforts previously started (monitors put up) that need support by the time the funding could be awarded? Specifically for maintenance and operations of an already established network.

**Answer 17:** Funding may be used to support existing air quality monitoring efforts; however, applications must still meet all of the RFA requirements. Additionally, as described in Section III.D.1. of the RFA, proposed costs that are included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally financed grant (e.g., EPA grants issued under Clean Air Act Sections 103 or 105) are not eligible for funding. See 1.c. on page 17 of the RFA.

**Question 18:** Can costs for publication of the project's findings in a peer-reviewed journal be included in the budget for the project?

**Answer 18:** Yes, publication costs can be allowable, as allowed under 2 CFR 200.461 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>).

**Question 19:** Is it also allowed under this RFA to use funds to cater food at outreach events and hosting of sensors?

**Answer 19:** Meals and light refreshments are allowed under narrow circumstances if they are reasonable and necessary to carry out your project (see EPA's Guidance on Selected Items of Costs, [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/201805/documents/recipient\\_guidance\\_selected\\_items\\_of\\_cost\\_fin\\_al.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/201805/documents/recipient_guidance_selected_items_of_cost_fin_al.pdf)).

**Question 20:** Does this grant opportunity permit the leasing of permanent work, storage, or meeting space for the project?

**Answer 20:** Leasing space is allowable, provided it is necessary and reasonable to accomplish the project, the project is consistent with the grant competition, and other requirements. Be sure to refer to EPA's Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance, especially the section on Rental/Lease on page 27 (<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-05/documents/applicant-budget-development-guidance.pdf>). This guidance is also referenced on pages 36-37 of the RFA.

**Question 21:** We plan to partner with a volunteer-based nonprofit. If we want to provide stipends to their staff to assist with the project, would they be considered participant support costs?

**Answer 21:** Yes, stipends are generally considered participant support costs (see [EPA's Participant Support Cost Policy](#), especially page 3 regarding differences between subsidies and subawards). If your partner would prefer to pay their employees and use a subaward from your project to pay them to carry out a portion of your project, then it would be a subaward. See [EPA's Subaward Policy](#) for further details.

## VI. Eligibility, including partner eligibility

**Question 1:** Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

**Answer 1:**

- EPA will accept applications from states (including the District of Columbia); local governments; U.S. territories and possessions; Indian tribes; public and private hospitals and laboratories; and other public or private nonprofit organizations.
- Nonprofit organization 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. Nonprofit organizations do not need be tax exempt under the Internal Revenue Code but may use documentation of tax-exempt status to demonstrate that it is a nonprofit.

**Question 2:** How do I prove that I am a “nonprofit group” or a “community-based organization” to apply for the community-based organization set-aside?

**Answer 2:** See Section III.A. on page 14 and Section III.C.6. on page 15 of the RFA. If applying for the community-based organization set-aside, the applicant must:

- 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.
- Specify the community they represent and provide documentation, such as their charter, mission statement, or other official documentation of the organization.
- Include a statement demonstrating the effectiveness as a representative of the applicable community.

Please note that this information will be evaluated under evaluation criterion 2.C. under Section V.A. of this RFA.

**Question 3:** Are for-profit organizations eligible for this funding?

**Answer 3:** No. For-profit organizations are not an eligible entity for this funding opportunity.

**Question 4:** Are nonprofits 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 eligible to apply for this grant funding?

**Answer 4:** No.

**Question 5:** If the community-based organization is an all-volunteer grassroots organization, does it matter if they don't have paid staff?

**Answer 5:** Whether the entity has paid staff does not affect whether the entity is eligible to apply for this grant competition. The organization needs to at least meet the nonprofit organization definition in Section

III.A. on page 13 of the RFA. Also, whether staff is paid will not impact how staff expertise is evaluated under criterion 6.B. on page 22 of the RFA.

**Question 6:** Can separate organizations partner and apply for funds under one application? If so, can those organizations be in separate cities or separate communities across state lines?

**Answer 6:** An eligible entity can partner with multiple entities within one application. The application must be submitted by one legal entity that meets the eligibility requirements under Section III.A. on pages 13-14 of the RFA. Partners can be located in separate cities or states, as long as the proposed project is consistent with the Scope of Work section of the RFA (Section I.B., beginning on page 5). Co-applicants are not allowed.

**Question 7:** The presentation mentions community and local efforts, and partnerships with government. Are you interested in engagement with other entities, such as universities or companies? Are subawards allowed to universities?

**Answer 7:** Yes, applicants can partner with universities and companies, in addition to local communities and nonprofit organizations. They can issue subawards to any entity eligible to receive subawards based on Section 7.0 in EPA's Subaward Policy (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients>). For-profit entities are generally prohibited from receiving subawards, but they can enter into contracts with the applicant. Be sure to read [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#). Both of these documents are referenced on page 2 of the RFA.

**Question 8:** I know that you cannot apply if you are a 501(c)(4), but can a 501(c)(4) be a subgrant awardee?

**Answer 8:** No, a 501(c)(4) is not eligible to receive a subaward under this competition. See 7.0(d) on page 4 of EPA's Subaward Policy (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients>):

“(d) Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section [501\(c\)\(4\) of the Internal Revenue Code](#) that engage in lobbying activities are ineligible for EPA subawards based on the Agency's policy for interpreting the [Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C.1611](#).”

**Question 9:** Are partnership "letters of support or MOU's" needed?

**Answer 9:** Partnership letters are encouraged, but they are not required (see Section IV.C. on page 19 of the RFA). However, as noted under Section 2 in Appendix B on page 32 of the RFA, partnership letters will be used to help evaluate Criterion 2 – Community Involvement.

**Question 10:** Is there a specific format for partnership letters?

**Answer 10:** There is not a specific format for partnership letters. The letter(s) should include appropriate information based on your project that demonstrates strong involvement as described on page 32 of the RFA.

**Question 11:** If a community-based organization applies, will they be penalized if the state doesn't want to partner on the application. In other words, can community organization demonstrate partnerships with other community organizations and not necessarily state or local governments?

**Answer 11:** It is not required that community-based organizations partner with state or local governments. Be sure to review Section 2 of Appendix B beginning on page 32 of the RFA to determine the best partnerships given your proposed project.

**Question 12:** Are subgrantees/community partners considered “applicants;” eg. can a local government apply as lead and designate a partner community organization with a specific project, and can the partner community organization apply as lead for a separate project/proposal?

**Answer 12:** The application must be submitted by one legal entity that meets the eligibility requirements under Section III.A. on pages 13-14 of the RFA. Partners can be located in separate cities or states, as long as the proposed project is consistent with the Scope of Work section of the RFA (Section I.B., beginning on page 5). Partners and subgrantees are not “applicants.” The number of applications limit on page 9 of the RFA is limited on the number of applications the legal entity submits, as described in Appendix A of the RFA. If an eligible entity is listed as a partner on one application but is not the entity submitting the application, then that entity can still submit two separate applications.

**Question 13:** Do state and local agencies need to have defined partnerships with community groups BEFORE they apply, or can they apply for this without having those partnerships in place? Can part of the project be to identify those groups and individuals?

**Answer 13:** It is not required to have partners identified prior to submitting an application. Developing partnerships is within scope of the competition. However, be sure to read through Appendix B in order to propose the best project for your community that addresses the evaluation criteria, especially Section 2 on Community Involvement beginning on page 32 of the RFA.

**Question 14:** Can a university that has a federal grant partner with a community organization to provide the air monitoring research?

**Answer 14:** Having an existing grant does not exclude an eligible subrecipient from partnering with an eligible applicant. The applicant and subrecipient needs to keep in mind that costs are ineligible “that are included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally financed grant, as required under 2 CFR 200.306(b)(5) and 200.403(f).” See 1.c. on page 17 of the RFA.

**Question 15:** For a joint proposal between a city government, nonprofit, and a university can the university be the lead applicant?

**Answer 15:** Only eligible entities as described in Section III.A. of the RFA can directly apply for a grant under this competition. As noted in Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA, “Institutions of Higher Education are not eligible to submit applications under this RFA.”

However, an entity that is eligible to apply (see Section III.A. beginning on page 13 of the RFA) can partner with an institution of higher education to carry out a portion of their proposed project. They can apply for a grant under this RFA and include the institution of higher education as a project partner. This competition is encouraging partnerships, as noted on pages 6-7. Also, be sure to read through the “Note” on page 2 about how an applicant can include a subrecipient as a project partner and [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) and [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#).

**Question 16:** Does public or private nonprofits include universities?

**Answer 16:** Universities typically meet the definition of “Institutions of higher education.” As noted in Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA, “Institutions of Higher Education are not eligible to submit applications under this RFA.” Nonprofits established by institutions of higher education that meet the nonprofit definition in Section III.A. on page 13 are eligible to apply for a grant under this competition. Universities as a whole registered as a nonprofit generally meet the institution of higher education definition, and thus are ineligible to apply directly for this competition.



Additionally, an entity that is eligible to apply (see Section III.A. beginning on page 13 of the RFA) can partner with an institution of higher education to carry out a portion of their proposed project. They can apply for a grant under this RFA and include the institution of higher education as a project partner. This competition is encouraging partnerships, as noted on pages 6-7. Also, be sure to read through the “Note” on page 2 about how an applicant can include a subrecipient as a project partner and [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) and [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#).

**Question 17:** Can a community college or community college district apply for these grants since they are part of the local government, receive state funding, represent majority vulnerable populations, and are not for profit?

**Answer 17:** Community colleges and community college districts are not eligible to directly apply for these grants because they meet the definition of “institutions of higher education” from 2 CFR 200.1. As noted in Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA, “Institutions of Higher Education are not eligible to submit applications under this RFA” even though they may also meet the definition of “state” or “local governments.”

However, an entity that is eligible to apply (see Section III.A. beginning on page 13 of the RFA) can partner with an institution of higher education to carry out a portion of their proposed project. They can apply for a grant under this RFA and include the institution of higher education as a project partner. This competition is encouraging partnerships, as noted on pages 6-7. Also, be sure to read through the “Note” on page 2 about how an applicant can include a subrecipient as a project partner and [EPA’s Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) and [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#).

**Question 18:** Can university professors be listed in the application? If so, can we list the university as the sub-recipient or can we only hire the professor as a consultant to help with data analysis?

**Answer 18:** Professors can be included as subrecipients, as long as you follow [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#) on page 2 of the RFA under “Note”.

**Question 19:** Are entities registered as a 501(c)(3) eligible?

**Answer 19:** Entities registered as a 501(c)(3) meet the definition of a nonprofit organization under Section III.A. of the RFA and are therefore eligible to apply for this competition. Universities as whole that are registered as a 501(c)(3) are ineligible because they meet the definition of “institution of higher education.” See question and answer VI.16 above.

**Question 20:** Would independent school districts be considered a unit of local government eligible to apply for this opportunity?

**Answer 20:** Yes, school districts are considered a unit of local government, and are therefore eligible to apply for this grant competition. “Local Government” is defined under [2 CFR 200.1](#), which includes school districts:

**Local government** means any unit of government within a state, including a:

- (1) County;
- (2) Borough
- (3) Municipality
- (4) City
- (5) Town
- (6) Township

- (7) Parish
- (8) Local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937
- (9) Special district
- (10) **School District**
- (11) Intrastate district
- (12) Council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law: and

Any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-, regional, or intra-State or local government.

**Question 21:** Are public health departments under a city considered a unit of local government, and thus eligible to apply for this opportunity?

**Answer 21:** Yes, public health departments of a city are considered a unit of local government and are therefore eligible to apply for this grant competition.

**Question 22:** Can we have a different active EPA grant while receiving funds for the Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities grant?

**Answer 22:** Whether you have an active EPA grant does not limit your eligibility to apply for the Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring for Communities request for applications (RFA). The only restriction on existing grants is that no costs from other active grants are included as costs or voluntary cost share in your application (see 1.c. on page 17 of the RFA, under "Ineligible Costs or Activities").

**Question 23:** Do Tribes need to have Clean Air Act TAS (Treatment As State) in place in order to apply for this grant?

**Answer 23:** Tribes do not have to have TAS to be eligible to apply for this competition. The minimum for tribes to be eligible is that they meet the Indian tribe under Section 302(r) of the Clean Air Act (see pages 13-14 of the RFA):

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."

**Question 24:** Can a consulting firm be included as a project partner?

**Answer 24:** Yes but be sure to review the Contracts and Subawards section of the "Additional Provisions" that are linked under Section I.F. on page 11 of the RFA (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>) and question/answer V.10. above.

**Question 25:** How many sub-recipients can participate in our application?

**Answer 25:** There is not a limit on the number of subrecipients you include in your application. Be sure to read through the "Note" on page 2 of the RFA about how an applicant can include a subrecipient as a project partner and [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) and [EPA's Subaward Policy](#).

**Question 26:** Is a local government considered a "community-based organization" for application eligibility purposes?

**Answer 26:** Local governments are considered a “local government” as defined by 2 CFR 200.1. To be considered a “community-based organization” under this competition, the entity needs to first meet the definition of a “nonprofit organization” as described in Section III.A. of the RFA.

**Question 27:** Many community groups advocate for change, is that considered lobbying?

**Answer 27:** It depends. If the nonprofit is registered as a 501(c)(4), then it is ineligible to apply for this competition (See question VI.4. above and Section III.A. of the RFA). Also, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.450, “The cost of certain influencing activities associated with obtaining grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, or loans is an unallowable cost.” Also see the additional EPA Solicitation Clauses that are referenced in Section I.F. on page 11 of the RFA.

**Question 28:** What's the difference between a nonprofit organization serving their community vs a community-based organization?

**Answer 28:** A nonprofit organization serving their community that can demonstrate “effectiveness as a representative of the applicable community” can be considered a community-based organization (see Section III.A. on page 14 of the RFA and Section 2.B. of Appendix B on page 33).

**Question 29:** Are organizations that are fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)3 eligible to apply?

**Answer 29:** The eligibility is tied to the registered organization that submits the application as described in Appendix A of this competition. The organization needs to be able to meet the nonprofit definition in Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA:

“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. Note that the definition of nonprofit in 2 CFR Part 200.1 specifically excludes the following types of organizations from the definition of “nonprofit organization” because they are separately defined in the regulation: (i) institutions of higher education; and (ii) state, local and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments.”

**Question 30:** Can national nonprofits apply if they're working on a community-based program?

**Answer 30:** The national nonprofit would need to have a local chapter in the applicable community to be able to apply for the community-based organization set-aside. See Section III.C.6. on page 15 of the RFA: “Local chapters of a national organization that can meet this definition can apply for the community-based organization set-aside.” If they are unable to meet this requirement, they can still apply for this competition if they meet the nonprofit organization definition under Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA, although they would be unable to apply for the community-based organization set-aside.

**Question 31:** Are hospitals eligible to apply for funding?

**Answer 31:** Public and private hospitals are eligible to apply. For-profit entities are not eligible to apply. See Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA.

**Question 32:** What if you are a community-based group or a neighborhood association that is not a nonprofit but you wish to apply? How could your neighborhood association qualify?

**Answer 32:** If your organization does not meet the definition of a nonprofit organization as described on page 13 of the RFA, then you can either: partner with an eligible entity and have them directly apply for a grant or

you can follow the directions for registering in SAM.gov from [EPA's Solicitation Clauses](#) (linked on page 15 of the RFA). If you are trying to register as a nonprofit organization, you should check with your state on how to register as a nonprofit. To have an eligible partner apply on your behalf, they would need to follow [EPA's Subaward Policy](#) and the additional directions in the "Note" on page 2 of the RFA.

**Question 33:** Can a for-profit be part of the grant application?

**Answer 33:** As noted in Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA, for-profits are ineligible to apply for a grant under this competition. However, for -profits can be part of your proposed project. Be sure to read through the "Note" on page 2 of the RFA about naming contractors and subrecipients.

**Question 34:** Can you apply for the community-based organization set aside if you are indeed a community-based organization, but you include a subaward to an entity that is not a community-based organization?

**Answer 34:** The prerequisite to be able to apply for the community-based organization set-aside is that your organization meets the description at the end of Section III.A. on page 14 of the RFA. Entities that meet this requirement may subaward or contract with an entity that does not meet this requirement. Be sure to read the "Note" on page 2 of the RFA regarding subawards and contracts.

**Question 35:** If the nonprofit works across the state, but largely in rural communities, can that count for a community-based program, or are CBPs limited to a single community of a small area?

**Answer 35:** As described in Section III.C.6. on page 15 of the RFA, to be able to apply for the community-based organization set-aside, the entity needs to have "demonstrated effectiveness as a representative of a community or a significant segment of a community." Further, the entity must "Specify the community they represent and provide documentation, such as their charter, mission statement, or other official documentation of the organization."

**Question 36:** If a nonprofit works with a community-based organization (so a collaboration), will that be considered as a community-based organization application?

**Answer 36:** The legal entity submitting the application needs to meet the eligibility requirements described in Section III.A. in order to apply. If a nonprofit organization cannot meet the requirements of a community-based organization, then it should not apply for the community-based organization set-aside.

**Question 37:** If \$2 million is a set-aside for community-based organizations, who is eligible for the \$20 million?

**Answer 37:** As noted under Answer II.1., the total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$20,000,000. Approximately \$2 million of this amount will be awarded to tribal governments under a tribal government set-aside under which only applications from tribal governments will be considered, and approximately \$2 million will be awarded to community-based organizations under a community-based organization set-aside under which only applications from community-based organizations will be considered. The amounts for the set-asides are approximations, and 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. All entities that meet the requirements in Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA can apply for the general pool of funding. These include: states (including the District of Columbia); local governments; U.S. territories and possessions; Indian tribes; public and private hospitals and laboratories; and other public or private nonprofit organizations.

**Question 38:** As a state agency partnering with a community-based organization, does that go under the set-aside or the general pool of funding?

**Answer 38:** This would go under the general pool of applications. As noted in Answer 36 above, the ability to

apply for a set-aside is based on the legal entity submitting the application and not the applicant's partners.

**Question 39:** Is a tribal government application automatically placed in the tribal set aside funding?

**Answer 39:** No, applicants 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). See Section III.C.5. on page 15 of the RFA.

**Question 40:** Many tribal members no longer live on reservations because of very poor conditions. Many of them live in urban communities outside of reservations. Do these communities of 500-1200 people etc. qualify to apply? Second, there are states that have state recognize tribes that live also in tribal communities. Are they eligible to apply?

**Answer 40:** This competition is authorized by Section 103 of the Clean Air Act (see Section I.D. on page 11 of the RFA). Therefore, this competition relies on the definition of "Indian tribe" from the Clean Air Act to determine eligibility. This definition is copied in Section III.A. on page 14 of the RFA: "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."

**Question 41:** What is the difference between a Project Partner and a Supporting Organization for this grant?

**Answer 41:** There is not a substantive difference between the two.

**Question 42:** Should an organization be listed as a Project Partner only if they are going to receive funding from the grant? Our Project Partner is a center within a city university that also will be a Subawardee.

**Answer 42:** Generally, an entity that will receive a subaward from a grant awarded under this competition should be considered a project partner.

**Question 43:** What is required to be included in the grant submission from a Project Partner that is also going to be a Subawardee, e.g., letter of commitment attachment, budget?

**Answer 43:** Partnership letters are encouraged to be submitted as part of your application (see pages 19 and 32 of the RFA), although they are not required. Commitment letters are considered the same as partnership letters.

**Question 44:** If there are a number of Supporting Organizations whose participation is crucial but that will participate without receiving any of the grant funding, e.g., by helping with community organizing, holding a meeting, distributing flyers, etc. on a voluntary basis, can we include letters of commitment from them as attachments?

**Answer 44:** Similar to the previous response, partnership letters are also encouraged in this situation.

**Question 45:** Are Territories and Freely Associated States (in the Pacific) eligible to apply?

**Answer 45:** Yes, territories are eligible to apply under this competition. Please see Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA:

"In accordance with Assistance Listing 66.034, applications will be accepted from states (including the District of Columbia); local governments; U.S. territories and possessions; Indian tribes; public and private hospitals and laboratories; and other public or private nonprofit organizations."

For the Pacific, this includes the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Guam, and American Samoa.

**Question 46:** Is a university medical center which is registered as a 501(c)(3) eligible to apply?

**Answer 46:** Yes, a university medical center registered as a 501(c)(3) is eligible either by meeting the nonprofit organization or hospital definitions under Section III.A. on page 13 of the RFA.

**Question 47:** Can we apply without a federally negotiated indirect cost rate?

**Answer 47:** You can apply for a grant under this competition without an indirect cost rate. The indirect cost rate requirements don't apply until and unless you are selected for a grant under the competition. If you receive a grant, it depends on what rates you can use. Please see the Indirect Cost Rate Competition Clause from Section I.F. of the RFA (<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-12/external-clauses-2021-12-03.pdf>). Your agency may meet the exempt thresholds, which would enable you to use your indirect rate negotiated with your state. Otherwise, you will need a federal indirect rate before drawing down any funds on the grant. Please also see Appendix VII to 2 CFR Part 200 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/appendix-Appendix%20VII%20to%20Part%20200>).

**Question 48:** Can a subaward be issued to a federal agency and a state Health Department?

**Answer 48:** Subawards to federal agencies are not allowed, but subawards to state agencies are allowed. Please review Section 7.0 of EPA's Subaward Policy, <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients>.

**Question 49:** Is a 501(c)(4) that does not engage in lobbying activities eligible to apply or receive a subaward?

**Answer 49:** A 501(c)(4) that does not engage in lobbying is eligible to apply – or receive a subaward – as long as the entity can provide a statement or other evidence that the organization does not lobby. If you request more than \$100,000 you will be required to complete [EPA Form 6600-66 Certification Regarding Lobbying](#) prior to award. (See [Full Applications Guidance](#) for details). This is not submitted as part of your application, but would be required if you are selected for funding and will be receiving more than \$100,000

**[NEW] Question 50:** If we include a cost share on the application document and that cost share along with the federal share is over \$500,000 will our application be ineligible? Is cost share included as part of the overall total?

**Answer 50:** The funding limit only applies to the federal funding you are requesting. Voluntary cost share that brings your project total over \$500,000 is acceptable, as long as the amount of EPA funding you are requesting is equal to or less than \$500,000 (See Section III.C.3. on page 15 of the RFA).

## VII. Other

**Question 1:** What is happening with the other \$30 million that Congress provided to EPA to enhance ambient air quality monitoring in communities across the US (See <https://www.epa.gov/arp/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-funding-under-arp>)?

**Answer 1:** In addition to the \$20 million competitive grants competition, EPA is using the balance of the \$50 million ARP ambient air monitoring funding to address health outcome disparities from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic including:

- **Direct Awards to Air Agencies for Continuous Monitoring of Fine Particles (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and Other Common**

**Air Pollutants:** EPA is allocating \$22.5 million to state, Tribal or local air agencies for enhanced monitoring of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and five other air pollutants regulated by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards under the Clean Air Act.

- **Enhanced Regional Capacity for Short-term Community Monitoring Needs:** EPA is working to invest \$5 million in agency mobile monitoring labs or air sensor loan programs. These investments will improve EPA's ability to support communities in need of short-term monitoring and air quality information.
- **Administrative Support:** EPA is improving air quality data management and ensuring the grants and programs are properly administered and tracked with \$2.5 million directed toward oversight and administration activities.

**Question 2:** Is the intent to apply binding as far as what pot is applied for?

**Answer 2:** Your notice of intent is not binding, and it is not required (although encouraged). Your final application can be different than your notice.

**Question 3:** In regards to the letter of intent: Is there a preference on whom from an agency should be signing the letter? Is Agency letterhead or email appropriate?

**Answer 3:** There is no preference for signee. It is up to the entity on who would be appropriate. The letter of intent can be sent via email.

**Question 4:** What are the parameters for data validation that is required by this RFA? Would documentation on aqmd.gov or a manufacture be sufficient, or must validation work be completed by the applicant?

**Answer 4:** Refer to Section I.B. of this RFA regarding ambient monitoring technology. Applicants should use commercially available technology and/or proven methods to monitor these air pollutants. EPA will not fund projects that involve the research, development, demonstration or evaluation of new air monitoring methods or equipment under this RFA. If it is unclear to the applicant whether their desired technology meets this specification, EPA suggests that the applicant provide a clear justification demonstrating that the instrumentation is proven to monitor air pollutants of concern. Applicants should also consider whether the technology is appropriate for your proposed project, consistent with Section I.B. of the RFA.

**Question 5:** Does EPA have plans to recognize and accept local air monitoring data as valid? Could this data be used for enforcement purposes by the State?

**Answer 5:** Projects can generate fit-for-purpose data to inform a range of decisions associated with improved environmental management. Grant recipients are required to implement quality assurance and quality control practices that will be applied during the project to ensure that the results obtained satisfy the project objectives. Additionally, a full Quality Assurance Project Plan will be required prior to award of an assistance agreement that involves environmental data collection, production, or use. Grant recipients should consider partnerships and equipment necessary to meet the intended goals of each project.

**Question 6:** Can EPA provide any guarantee that the agency will take action if communities detect levels of criteria pollutants above the NAAQS through this program? Or levels of toxics above Reference Concentrations?

**Answer 6:** Projects can generate fit-for-purpose data to inform a range of decisions associated with improved environmental management. Grant recipients should consider partnerships and equipment necessary to meet the intended goals of each project.

**Question 7:** How will the data collected through this grant be utilized by the EPA?

**Answer 7:** Projects can generate fit-for-purpose data to inform a range of decisions associated with improved environmental management. Grant recipients should consider partnerships and equipment necessary to meet the intended goals of each project.

**Question 8:** What reference materials or standards are available to ensure reliability of equipment readings?

**Answer 8:** Grant recipients are required to implement quality assurance and quality control practices that will be applied during the project to ensure that the results obtained satisfy the project objectives. Additionally, a full Quality Assurance Project Plan will be required prior to award of an assistance agreement that involves environmental data collection, production, or use.

**Question 9:** Can you review how EPA is evaluating or ranking health outcome disparities across the nation?

**Answer 9:** As stated on page 1 of the RFA and later elaborated in the Scope of Work beginning on page 5, EPA is soliciting applications from 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. Individual proposals will be evaluated using the criteria in section V.A. of the RFA.

**Question 10:** There are two big obstacles preventing certain communities from applying: 1) Lack of air monitoring expertise (who would actually do the monitoring? Communities don't have this expertise, and most consultants here are pro-industry and biased against communities); and 2) Even if we generate compelling air quality data, it will be dismissed/attacked by our state air agency, so what's the point? Any suggestions you can provide to overcome these obstacles would be greatly appreciated.

**Answer 10:** EPA cannot comment on specific projects. Projects can generate fit-for-purpose data to inform a range of decisions associated with improved environmental management. Grant recipients should consider partnerships and equipment necessary to meet the intended goals of each project. Additionally, it is not required that community-based organizations partner with state or local governments. Refer to Section 2 of Appendix B beginning on page 32 of the RFA to determine the best partnerships given your proposed project.

**Question 11:** Where can we view previous projects that have utilized these funding? Has the long-term benefits of these projects been recorded anywhere?

**Answer 11:** This is the first competitive grant process of its kind from EPA for enhanced air quality monitoring for communities.

**Question 12:** Does the EPA keep a list of locations where we can calibrate instruments? We are having problems finding anywhere close where we can calibrate the instruments to our local conditions.

**Answer 12:** EPA does not have a list of locations to calibrate instruments as those services are highly dependent on the type of instrumentation and the location. We recommend reaching out to your instrument manufacturer for additional assistance.

**Question 13:** Will we hear the status of direct awards before we apply for this competition?

**Answer 13:** Eligible entities may apply for EPA funding under this RFA that have been previously submitted to EPA, but not awarded. If an applicant submits an application under this RFA for a project that is funded by another grant, the applicant will be contacted by EPA to determine which application(s) the applicant will withdraw from the competition. Further, on page 12 of the RFA under partial funding, it states that in appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions 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 was evaluated and selected for award, thereby maintaining the integrity of the competition and selection process.

**Question 14:** Will the data collected via these grants be publicly available?

**Answer 14:** Section 2 of Appendix B requires applicants to ensure that the collected data is made publicly available. From page 33: “Applicants should include a strategy to ensure that the collected data is useable, accessible to the public, and will be shared with appropriate stakeholders (*e.g.*, local government) and local communities in a practicable amount of time. Data and/or related observations must be shared throughout the lifetime of the project and not only after the project is at or near completion.”

**Question 15:** What is a direct award and who can apply for a direct award?

**Answer 15:** A direct award is a non-competitive award for state, tribal, and local air pollution control agencies. See answer VII.1. above for more information regarding the American Rescue Plan direct awards for air monitoring. The direct awards will be used by state, tribal, and local air agencies to enhance existing ambient air monitoring networks required by the Clean Air Act. See <https://www.epa.gov/arp/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-funding-under-arp>.

**Question 16:** Can an organization submit an intent to apply without being registered on grants.gov?

**Answer 16:** An entity that is not registered in Grants.gov can submit an intent to apply. However, they will need to be registered in Grants.gov before the March 25, 2022, deadline as described in Appendix A of the RFA to apply for a grant.

**Question 17:** If the start date is in November 2022, and funds need to be spent in 3 years, will the applicant be required to continue monitoring for a full 3 years before submitting the final report to the EPA and if this extends beyond 3 years from the award date, will we be able to bill for the final operation and reporting costs out to June of 2026?

**Answer 17:** The total grant project should be no more than 3 years from the start date – this would include the time to procure the equipment, so the monitoring funded by the grant will typically be less than 3 years (see Section II.D. on page 12 of the RFA). Recipients are encouraged to continue monitoring after the grant funding ends, if the entity is capable to continue monitoring without additional grant funding.

**Question 18:** We create products that are related to air monitoring. Can the EPA distribute information about our products? Also, can we receive a copy of those who apply to this grant competition?

**Answer 18:** We cannot endorse one product over another for this competition. Also, you would need to submit a FOIA request (<https://www.epa.gov/foia/foia-request-process>) in order to receive a list of the applicants under a grant competition.

**Question 19:** Where can I request air monitoring station location data that is shared on the AirData Quality monitoring map?

**Answer 19:** Monitoring station data is available to view and/or download directly from the [Air Data Air Quality Monitors map](#) through the attribution table for each layer (Click the ellipsis next to the layer name in the table of contents > Select “View in Attribute Table” > Select “Export all to CSV” under the options menu.) Additionally, Site and Monitor Descriptions can be downloaded from the [Air Data Pre-Generated Data Files](#) website.

**[NEW] Question 20:** Is this competition for projects that “address environmental and health outcome disparities stemming from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic”? Or is it for projects that “address environmental and health outcome disparities stemming from pollution and/or the COVID-19 pandemic”?

**Answer 20:** As noted on page 1 of the RFA, this competition is for projects that will “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.” Further, as part of the Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities evaluation criterion, projects will be evaluated on “how the project will effectively address disproportionate health outcomes from pollution and the COVID–19 pandemic.” See page 33 of the RFA.