EPA Grants Competition Process Webinar, April 28, 2022
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1:   Will this presentation include DERA grants?

A1:   This presentation is of a general nature and is not specific to EPA programs. Please visit https://www.epa.gov/dera for more information on DERA grants.

Q2:   How are we evaluated for grants if we are a new applicant without prior business or grant history?

A2:   Evaluation criteria are specific to the EPA grant program and will be discussed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section V. If the EPA grant program includes past performance, they recognize that some applicants may not have past performance and will receive a neutral score.

Q3:   Is it possible to search EPA grants by region or state on EPA's website or on Grants.gov?

A3:   There are various filters you can select to limit grant opportunities. These filters do not include regions/states. However, you can replicate that filtering by using the keyword "region." Most EPA regional grant opportunities include the Region in the title.

Q4:   What is the difference between SAM.gov and Grants.gov?

A4:   SAM.gov is the system to do business with the federal government-all awards (contracts and grants). The registration is tailored to one or both of those tracks. Grants.gov is the federal government one-stop shop for assistance awards, also known as grants. It is the system to which you will submit an application to an EPA funding opportunity.

Q5:   Does EBiz replace DUNS registration? If we have already registered on SAM.gov can we ignore registering with EBiz for now?

A5:   DUNS was phased out on April 4, 2022. The SAM.gov-generated Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is now the official UEI. Within the SAM.gov registration, you need to identify your organization's EBiz point of contact. Should you want to register an account and apply for grants in Grants.gov, you need to identify the EBiz point of contact in SAM.gov for your organization. Please take a look at the following resource for more information: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html.

Q6:   Is Workspace a new system?

A6:   It has been around for a few years; it's within Grants.gov.

Q7:   An organization named samfulfillment always emails me that I need to update more information after I submitted my application. Is this organization related to SAM.gov or Grants.gov?

A7:   Please be careful as SAM.gov does not send emails to individuals or organizations. SAM.gov is free to use. If you reach out to the Federal Service Desk (SAM.gov help desk) they will contact you but not from that email domain. This email domain seems to be a company and it is not affiliated with the federal government. Please note that registration in SAM.gov and Grants.gov is always FREE.

Q8:   Do you have specific grants set aside for HUBZone companies?

    A8:   No. There are no grant set asides for HUBZone companies. HUBZone is typically aligned with contracts, not grants.

Q9:   Are Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) numbers public? I have subgrantees that had DUNS numbers, but I don't see some of them on SAM.gov.

    A9:   Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) are public, however there are some limitations. Non-federal users can only check the registration status of entities that are linked to your SAM.gov account. There is more information at: https://sam.gov/content/status-tracker.

Q10:   My company submitted an application in February. The status has stayed at "Agency Tracking Number Assigned" for two months. The result should be released next month. Does that mean the proposal was rejected?

    A10:   Please reach out to the Agency point of contact in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for details on the status of an application.

Q11:   With the direction to help more Environmental Justice communities, how will EPA ensure those communities are prioritized if their application is not reviewed due to a technical error? Some of these communities are the ones most likely to not have a professional proposal writer, lack staff resources, are not technical savvy and/or may not even have the ability/knowledge to process an application online.

    A11:   EPA is continually working to make our application process as accessible as possible. Some program offices provide simple instructions on what needs to go on the proposal. If you are referring to technical issues registering in SAM.gov and Grants.gov and the potential issues that can crop up because of that, I would encourage you to document the issues you're having, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk, and follow the directions in Section IV of the funding opportunity announcement.

Q12:   Can you explain the changes EPA is requiring for procurement?

    A12:   For more information on procurement requirements for EPA grants, please follow 2 CFR 200. These requirements have not changed recently but EPA is starting to include procurement guidelines in certain solicitations.

Q13:   How can a first-time applicant receive guidance on communicating relevant past performance?

    A13:   If the specific EPA grant program is using past performance as an evaluation criteria, they will expressly state that in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). If you do not have past performance, state that in the application and you will receive a neutral score as it will state in the NOFO.

Q14:   What is the timeframe to receive the Notice of Award?

    A14:   Generally within 120 days, but it may vary by program, number of applications received, etc.

Q15:   Are there any recommended instructional resources for the Uniform Guidance for applicants who have never received a federal grant before and want to make sure they follow all the requirements?

    A15:   There are many resources to learn more about the Uniform Guidance. All of EPA's trainings, available at https://www.epa.gov/grants/recipient-training-opportunities, follow 2 CFR 200 and our Agency specific regulations at 2 CFR 1500. There are many companies that offer general trainings, but there are a lot of free trainings on Grants.gov: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants.html.

Q16:   How are the Justice 40 requirements being incorporated into the application process?

    A16:   EPA Program Offices determine how to incorporate Justice 40 requirements into competitive funding opportunities. Any requirements related to Justice 40 will be described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Q17:   What roles are required to apply for a grant?

    A17:   An Administrative Contact, Financial Contact, Project Manager, and Authorized Representative are required.

Q18:   Are there any limitations or boundaries for grant writers assisting more than one organization on the multiple government sign-ins?

    A18:   SAM.gov and Grants.gov utilize Login.gov so you can have a single sign-on for those government systems. You can learn more about Login.gov at https://login.gov/what-is-login/.

Q19:   Are the procurement requirements for contractors different than if a subrecipient was written into a proposal or application?

    A19:   No, the procurement requirements, found at 2 CFR 2003.317 through 200.327 and 2 CFR 1500.10 through 1500.11, are the same regardless of whether the contractor is written into the proposal at the time of application. However, when an applicant names a contractor in a competitive proposal, if they have not followed proper procurement procedures it may jeopardize their selection and/or award.

Q20:   EPA and other agencies seek comments on development of grant programs. Does submitting comments help when applying for a grant?

    A20:   When EPA seeks comments and feedback on development of grant programs is it done in a way that ensures no potential applicant will receive a competitive advantage.

Q21:   Would an Environmental Justice community need to form a non-profit 501(c)(3) to be eligible?

    A21:   Eligibility is generally determined by the Assistance Listing and varies by competitive funding opportunity. To determine eligibility for a specific program, review Section III of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.