



Development and Maintenance of the Compliance Assistance Center Platform

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Office of Compliance
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (MC 2221-A)
Washington, D.C. 20460

<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/assistance/centers/index.html>

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)
TITLE: Development and Maintenance of the Compliance Assistance Center Platform
ACTION: Request for Initial Proposals (RFIP)
RFP NUMBER: EPA-OECA-OC-09-01

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.305 - Compliance Assistance Support for Services to the Regulated Community and Other Assistance Providers

DATES: The closing date and time for receipt of initial proposal submissions, regardless of mode of submission, is **October 1, 2009, 4:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST)**. All hard copies of initial proposal packages must be received by Tracy Back by **October 1, 2009, 4:00 p.m., EST**. Electronic submissions must be addressed to back.tracy@epa.gov and include the "Compliance Assistance Center Platform Submission" - [name of applicant] in the subject line and be received **by October 1, 2009, 4:00 p.m. EST** in order to be considered for funding. Initial proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

Only eligible entities whose initial proposal(s) meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be invited to submit a final proposal. Final applications and forms will be requested from the eligible entity whose final proposal is successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for this award. The successful entity will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits proposals to continue the development and maintenance of the Compliance Assistance Center Platform (Center Platform). The Center Platform includes a suite of comprehensive web-based tools necessary to create full-featured Compliance Assistance Centers.

FUNDING/AWARDS: The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$1,250,000. EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement from this announcement, subject to availability of funds and the quality of proposals received.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has sponsored partnerships with industry, academic institutions, environmental groups and other federal and state agencies to establish Compliance Assistance Centers (Centers). The Centers provide comprehensive, easy to understand compliance information targeted specifically to industry sectors or geographic areas. In 1996, four Centers opened for business. The popularity of these Centers led to the opening of 12 more Centers. Businesses, local governments, and assistance providers are using the centers. In FY 2008 the Centers were visited over 2,220,000 times by their target audiences and the public. These visits included over 7 million requests for web pages and targeted compliance documents.

In October 2001, EPA received a congressional earmark to "to facilitate industrial input into EPA's compliance assistance clearinghouse and to expand the scope of compliance assistance centers". In response to

the congressional earmark, EPA partnered with the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences (NCMS) to develop the Center Platform from which new sector-specific or topical Centers can be “launched”. The Center Platform includes a suite of comprehensive web-based tools necessary to create full-featured Centers. Funding a single organization to efficiently create and manage the web-mechanics of a Center and to develop compliance assistance tools that all Centers can use has reduced the financial barrier to creating new Centers. EPA views the Center Platform as an opportunity to build upon the existing Centers programs to increase efficiencies and deliver assistance to more sectors.

B. Scope of Work

The ultimate goal of the Center Platform is to help industry comply with environmental regulations. The Center Platform is partnering with a broad range of trade and professional organizations and government agencies to create compliance assistance resources for a variety of sectors. To date, the following four Centers have been created and launched via Center Platform resources: Border Center (www.bordercenter.org); Environmental Compliance for Automotive Recyclers (www.ecarcenter.org); Construction Industry Compliance Assistance Center (www.cicacenter.org); and the Healthcare Environmental Resource Center (www.herccenter.org). In developing new Centers, the Center Platform must work intensively with its partners to identify specific customer needs, customize tools, and workout the distribution of responsibilities.

In addition to the Centers developed on the Center Platform, several other Centers developed by other organizations have migrated to the Center Platform, including the Local Government Environmental Assistance Network (www.lgean.org) and the Transportation Environmental Resource Center. The Center Platform also develops tools and resources that are available to other Centers and assistance providers. Most notably, the Center Platform has created and maintains a suite of state-specific resource locators (www.envcap.org/statetools/index.cfm). The state resource locators are offered for a wide range of topics to help find important environmental compliance information specific to individual states. Visit www.envcap.org to learn more about the Center Platform

For the project funded under this RFIP, the Center Platform grantee must:

- Work with content experts and target audiences to continue enhancements and maintenance of the following Centers: Border Center; Construction Industry Compliance Assistance Center; Environmental Compliance for Automotive Recyclers; Healthcare Environmental Resource Center; Local Government Environmental Assistance Network; National Metal Finishing Resource Center; Paints and Coatings Resource Center; and the Food Processing Environmental Assistance Center (to be launched in Fall 2009).
- Support the “re-development” of the Transportation Environmental Resource Center (TERC). TERC has not been funded for several years; much of the existing content has since become out-dated and/or irrelevant. The grantee must work intensively with its partners to identify specific customer needs, customize tools, and workout the distribution of responsibilities to reestablish TERC as a reliable environmental assistance resource for the transportation sector. (A separate grant will be awarded to support TERC content development and sector expertise.)
- Maintain existing state resource locators and develop additional new state resource locators and other tools to help the regulated community better understand and comply with applicable state environmental regulations
- Support the development of new Centers and work intensively with industry partners to identify specific customer needs, customize tools, and workout the distribution of responsibilities. Depending on the availability of funds, EPA anticipates the development of 2-5 new Centers during the proposed 5 year project period.
- Use stakeholder communication channels to obtain feedback on Center Platform resources and promote/disseminate environmental assistance information on a timely basis to the various stakeholders.
- Develop innovative and cost efficient mechanisms allowing state regulatory agencies and other providers

to share and/or contribute to Center Platform resources.

- With input from the regulated community and EPA, develop a minimum of 10 sector-specific entry pages providing quick access to *existing* environmental assistance content. The sector entry pages will serve as portals to relevant information developed by the Centers and other organizations as appropriate (e.g. EPA). Individual sector entry pages will use navigation structures specific to the sector thereby providing easy access to relevant environmental content. EPA's Retail Industry Portal (<http://www.epa.gov/retailindustry/>) and the National Center for Manufacturing Science's portal for Ports (<http://sp.envcap.org/>) are examples of the types of sector entry pages to be developed by the grantee.
- Maintain and enhance the Centers' Web portal at <http://www.assistancecenters.net/>. The Centers' Web portal supports Centers outreach and drives traffic to individual Centers. Center events, highlights and accomplishments are announced at the Centers' Web portal. Web 2.0 tools should be considered to enhance the Center Web portal's effectiveness.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan: proposals must support [Goal 5 of EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan, Compliance and Environmental Stewardship](#); Objective 5.1, achieve environmental protection through improved compliance. Specifically, proposed activities will enable regulated entities to better understand and meet their environmental regulatory obligations, improve environmental processes and reduce pollution.

Outputs. The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Potential outputs from the Center Platform include:

- Number of user sessions
- Number of listserv subscribers
- Number of page views

Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI(C) of this announcement, "Reporting Requirement."

Outcomes. The term "outcome" means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected outcomes from the Center Platform include, but are not limited to the following:

- Increased understanding of environmental regulations
- Improved environmental practices as a result of Center Platform use
- Reduced, treated, or eliminated pollution as a result of Center Platform use

D. Supplementary Information.

Clean Air Act Section 103(b)(3) allows for grants to nonprofit organizations to conduct research, investigations, experiments, demonstration projects, surveys, and studies related to the causes, effects, extent, prevention and control of air pollution. The Clean Water Act Section 105 allows for grants to nonprofit organizations to conduct and promote the coordination of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstration projects, surveys, public education programs and studies relating to the prevention of emissions to water ways. The Solid Waste Disposal Act Section 8001(a) allows for grants to nonprofit organizations to conduct and promote the coordination of research, investigations, experiments, training,

demonstration projects, surveys, public education programs and studies relating to solid waste (e.g., health and welfare effects of exposure to materials present in solid waste and methods to eliminate such effects). The project will involve the identification and minimization of pollution sources from the regulated entity activities to the air, water and land. The project encourages and provides technical services and information on the prevention and control of air pollution and makes such information available to industry and EPA's state partners. The project also accelerates efforts to refine and achieve practical application of waste management techniques for the discharge of pollutants by developing and providing information for industry on how to comply with laws and regulations. Lastly, this project provides information about the reduction of wastes, identification of solid waste, and methods to improve performance and compliance to industry, public authorities and entities that train other environmental assistance providers.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. What is the amount of funding available?

The total estimated funding expected to be available for the award under this competitive opportunity is approximately \$1,250,000. This amount is subject to the availability of funds and quality of evaluated proposals.

B. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates the award of one cooperative agreement under this announcement, subject to the availability of funds and quality of evaluated proposals. EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available after the original selection. Any additional selection for award will be made no later than six months from the date of the original selection.

EPA also reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

C. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?

The estimated project period for the award resulting from this solicitation will begin in May 2010. Proposed project periods may be up to five years.

D. Funding Type

The funding for the selected project will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant 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 this project will be:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient);
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Entities

In accordance with CFDA 66.305, proposals will be accepted from nonprofit organizations, state, tribal and local governments. Colleges, universities, and community colleges are eligible to apply.

Non-profit organization, as defined by OMB Circular A-122, located at 2 CFR Part 230, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization which: (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. For this purpose, the term "non-profit organization" excludes (i) colleges and universities; (ii) hospitals; (iii) state, local, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; and (iv) those non-profit organizations which are excluded from coverage of this part in accordance with § 230.20(c)

Non-profit 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 are not eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

There are no statutory or regulatory match requirements.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants must meet all eligibility criteria in order to be considered for award. Only eligible entities whose proposal(s) meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be invited to submit a final proposal. Only final proposals from eligible entities (see Section III.A above) that meet all threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement.

Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applicant demonstrates a previous working relationship(s) with experts and national organizations devoted to environmental compliance.
2. Applicant demonstrates an understanding of the environmental needs of regulated entities.
3. Applicant and/or partnering organization demonstrates familiarity with federal, state and local environmental regulations and experience in developing tools (e.g., training, plain-language guides, fact-sheets, Agency contact locators, etc) to improve the audiences' understanding of their regulatory obligations.
4. Applicant demonstrates previous experience in developing and maintaining web-based services.
5. Applicant demonstrates that it has an indirect cost rate that has been approved or is pending approval by a federal agency or has a cost allocation system that meets the requirements in the applicable OMB Circular.
6. Regarding initial proposal submissions:
 - a. Proposals must be formatted for 8 1/2" x 11" paper using no smaller than 11 point font with 1" margins. A page equals one side of paper. Hard copy submissions should be submitted on recycled paper and should be double-sided to reduce waste. The proposal cannot exceed a maximum of 10 single-spaced typewritten pages; a double sided page is considered two pages.
 - b. Proposals must be received by the EPA as specified in Section IV of this announcement on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.
 - c. Submissions received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling. For hard copy or e-mailed submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with

Tracy Back (back.tracy@epa.gov or 202.564.7076) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

- d. Hard copy submissions will only be accepted via an **express delivery service**. EPA will not accept submissions submitted via fax or standard 1st Class Mail delivery by U.S. Postal Service.

IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain Proposal Package

Applicants can download individual grant proposal/application forms from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm.

To obtain a hard copy of materials, please send an email or written request to the Agency contact listed in Section VII of this announcement.

B. Mode of Submission

Applicants have the following options to submit their proposals: 1) Hard copy by express delivery service to the specified EPA contact below, or 2) electronically through email to the specified EPA contact below. Proposals will not be accepted via fax or standard 1st class mail delivery by U.S. Postal Service. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described below in Section IV.C "Content of Proposal Submission" regardless of mode of transmission.

1. Hard Copy Submission

Please provide one original of the submission and four copies--**no binders or spiral binding**--to:

Hard Copy via Express Delivery (FedEx, UPS, DHL, USPS, etc.)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Tracy Back (Mail Code: 2224A)
Office of Compliance / AR South room 7033b
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: 202.564.7076

2. E-mail Submission

E-mail submissions must be submitted to back.tracy@epa.gov and be received by the submission deadline stated in Section IV.G of this announcement. Please note that if you choose to submit your materials via e-mail, you are accepting all risks attendant to e-mail submission including server delays and transmission difficulties. E-mail submissions exceeding 15MB will experience transmission delays which will affect when they are received by the Agency. For these size submissions, applicants should submit their application materials via hardcopy or else they may be received late and not considered for funding. Applicants submitting their application materials through e-mail should confirm receipt of the materials with Tracy Back as soon as possible after submission. Electronic submissions should use "Center Platform Submission" in the subject line.

C. Content of Final Proposal Submission

Only those applicants that meet all of the threshold eligibility criteria will be invited to submit a final proposal. All final proposals must be formatted for 8 1/2" x 11" paper using no smaller than 11 point font with 1" margins. A page equals one side of paper. Hard copy submissions should be submitted on recycled paper and should be double-sided to reduce waste. The final proposal package **must** include all of the following materials:

- **Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance**
Complete the form (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm> .There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

- **Standard Form (SF) 424A , Budget Information**
Complete the form (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm> .There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
- **Narrative Proposal**
The document should be readable in PDF for Windows and consolidated into a single file and be prepared as stated below.

The Narrative Proposal (including sections 1-3 below) **cannot** exceed a maximum of 20 single-spaced typewritten pages, including the Summary Page. Pages in excess of 20 will not be considered. Supporting materials, such as resumes and letters of support, can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 20-page limit; a double sided page is considered two pages.

1. Summary Page

- a. Project Title
- b. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
- c. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA.
- d. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost share or in-kind resources.
- e. Project period. Provide beginning and ending dates.

2. Narrative Proposal

The Narrative Proposal must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-II of this announcement, and must address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.

Proposals must support Goal 5 of EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan, Compliance and Environmental Stewardship; Objective 5.1, achieve environmental protection through improved compliance. By offering compliance assistance to those who want to comply with environmental regulations EPA seeks to ensure that the public receives the benefits promised by our environmental laws.

- a. **Project Summary/Approach:** The summary shall contain the following components:
 - i. Detailed project summary, description of specific actions and methods to be undertaken and the responsible institutions, including estimated time line for each task.
 - ii. Description of the associated work products to be developed.
 - iii. Explanation of project benefits to the public, and specifically the potential

- audience(s) served.
- iv. Description of the roles of the applicant and partners, if any.
- v. Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. For *example*; Expertise in developing and maintaining web based environmental compliance assistance services, or similar projects, and its experience in working with compliance issues.
- vi. Budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task.

***Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency.**

b. Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the project (**See Section I**), including what measurements will be used to track your progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated. Identify the expected project outputs and how progress towards achieving the expected outputs will be tracked and measured.

c. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).

If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

3. Detailed Budget Narrative

Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget found in the SF-424A. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

4. Attachments (Optional). These are not included in the 20-page limit.

a. Resumes. Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.

b. Support Letters. Specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.

D. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards acquire contract services or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 [CFR](#) Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. 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 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant 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 proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of [OMB Circular A-133](#), and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

E. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process for final proposals that will be used by EPA to make its selection under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, if appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

(i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.

(ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees

and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

F.. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date and time for receipt of initial proposal submissions, regardless of mode of submission, is **October 1, 2009, 4:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST)**. All hard copies of proposal packages must be received by Tracy Back by date, 4:00 p.m. EST. Electronic submissions must be addressed to back.tracy@epa.gov and include, "Compliance Assistance Center Platform Submission" in the subject line and must be received **by October 1, 2009, 4:00 p.m. EST**. Proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

Only those applicants that meet all of the threshold eligibility criteria will be invited to submit a final proposal. Following EPA's evaluation of initial proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications and forms will be requested, as necessary, from the entity whose final proposal is selected for funding. The entity whose final proposal is selected for funding will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

G.. Confidential Business Information

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure. However, the agency considers competitive proposals/applications confidential and protected from disclosure prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

H. Pre-Proposal 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 proposal packages, provide informal comments on draft narrative proposals, or provide advice and/or guidance to applicants on how to respond to ranking criterion. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, EPA will respond to questions in writing from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criterion, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

V. FINAL PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

Only eligible entities whose proposal(s) meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be invited to submit a final proposal. Final proposals will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion set forth below. Applicants should explicitly address this criterion as part of their proposal package submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
<p>1. Project Summary/Approach: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors: (i) (15 pts) the extent and quality to which the narrative proposal includes a well-conceived strategy for addressing all of the requirements in Section I, Part B (Scope of Work) and Part C (EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs), (ii)(10 pts) the comprehensiveness of approach to service delivery, (iii) (8 pts) the extent and quality to which the narrative proposal's goals are realistic and innovative and will be actually implemented by project end, (iv) (10 pts) whether the narrative proposal sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project(s).</p>	<p>43</p>
<p>2. Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the effectiveness of the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I of this announcement.</p>	<p>15</p>

<p>3. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's: (i) (5 pts) past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the narrative proposal as described in Section IV.C of the announcement, (ii) (15 pts) demonstrated understanding of environmental compliance, (iii) (4 pts) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, (iv) (3 pts) history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements described in Section IV of the announcement including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not, and (v) (5 pts) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items i and ii above—a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p>	32
<p>4. Budget/Resources: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors: (i) (5 pts) whether the proposed project budget is appropriate to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes, (ii) (5 pts) whether the budget provides an approximation of the percentage of the budget designated for each major activity.</p>	10

B. Review and Selection Process

Initial proposals will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those applicants meeting all of the threshold factors will be invited to submit a final proposal. Final proposals will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA evaluation team. Each final proposal will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered according to the numerical score. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the Approving Official based on this ranking.

C. Other Factors

Final funding decisions will be made by the Approving Official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendation of the EPA evaluation team. In making the final funding decisions, the Approving Official may also consider programmatic priorities and geographic diversity of funds. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA Award Official.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

Following evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

Proposal Notifications

1. EPA anticipates notification to the *successful* applicant will be made via telephone, email or postal mail. The notification will advise the applicant that its proposed project has been successfully evaluated and recommended for award and provide instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

This notification, which advises that the applicant's proposed project has been recommended for award, is **not** an authorization to begin performance. The award notice signed by the EPA grants officer is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. At a minimum, this process can take up to 90 days from the date of recommendation.

- 2 EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicant(s) will be made via email or postal mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (FS) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement

A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm.

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants selected for funding may be required to provide a copy of their application to their **State Point of Contact** (SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Application and not all states require such a review. A listing of State Point of Contacts (SPOC) may be viewed at: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html

C. DUNS Number

All applicants **are required** to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.

D. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final technical report will be required. Quarterly reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for next quarter and summary of expenditures are required. The final technical report shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final technical report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final technical report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of quarterly reports will be established by EPA, after award.

E. Disputes

Assistant agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) located on the web at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?position=all&page=3629&dbname=2005_register

F. Non-profit Administrative Capability

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form, with supporting documents, contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
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All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail, fax or email to the contact person listed above. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at <http://epa.gov/compliance/assistance/centers//index.html>