

Criterion	Description of Evaluation Criteria	Points
Program Approach	<p><b>Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which:</b></p> <p>1. <b>Project RFA:</b> The applicant demonstrates the ability and approach for managing a subaward grants program which encompasses the GLEJGP program elements described in <a href="#">Section I.D.</a> through the following <b>(10 points)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying plans to engage target communities and solicit and select project applications, delineating how a fair and transparent process for identifying new project subawards will be implemented, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clearly stating the evaluation criteria to be used for the subaward project selections, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An evaluation of any possible <b>Project Subrecipient's</b> entity's abilities to carry-out the project and sustain expected outcomes after the initial project period is complete;</li> <li>▪ The consistency of the project with the GLRI Action Plan, including achievement of GLRI measures of progress;</li> <li>▪ The project's linkage to other overarching plans, including but not limited to LAMPs, Domestic Action Plans, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, watershed management plans, etc.;</li> <li>▪ The technical merit and feasibility of the project.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensuring that project subawards will contribute to the existing GLRI AP III measures of progress; help achieve the goals and priorities in the GLRI AP III; and allow all communities to benefit from programs to protect and restore the Great Lakes and have equal access to the decision-making process.</li> <li>• Ensuring that project subawards will include target community involvement and deliver environmental justice benefits in underserved communities through activities directly related to the GLRI Action Plan (GLRI AP III).</li> <li>• If leveraging is proposed, applicants will also be evaluated based on how they will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance (e.g., if they have letters of commitment), the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role and impact the leveraged funds/resources will play to support the proposed project activities.</li> </ul> <p>Applications will be scored on how well the Project RFA will result in projects that exhibit: 1) a diversity of project types; 2) distribution</p>	30

across the geographic project region identified within the application; and 3) representation of the needs of the target communities.

2. **Technical Support:** The applicant demonstrates the administrative capacity to provide technical support, as referenced in [Section I.C](#), to Project Subrecipients as needed to achieve the objectives of the GLRI Action Plan as described in Section I.C, by **(10 points)**:
  - Ensuring Project Subrecipient compliance with applicable regulatory requirements and the General Terms and Conditions of EPA cooperative agreements;
  - Providing oversight for administrative, travel, fiscal, and reporting tasks, as well as technical, outreach, and management action support to Project Subrecipients. Applicants will ensure Project Subrecipient compliance with all federal reporting and project oversight requirements, e.g., quality assurance and financial reporting;
  - Securing and/or providing relevant staff expertise, qualifications, staff knowledge, and/or other experts experienced and qualified to successfully achieve GLRI AP III goals as described in [Section I.C](#).; and
  - Describe how Project Subrecipients will be engaged to identify technical assistance needs, including how the applicant will respond to these needs by supplementing training, programming, or other resources.
  
3. **EJ and Community Involvement:** The applicant’s demonstrated familiarity with the institutional, environmental, and socio-economic conditions of the Great Lakes region, including **(10 points)**:
  - Comprehension of the target community’s history and its relationship to the conditions stated above;
  - Current relationships with target community leaders and organizations, as well as past and/or present projects within the target community or projects conducted with similar underserved communities;
  - A detailed understanding of the specific needs of the target community or communities, linked to the EJ and GLRI AP III measures specified in [I.F. Outcomes, Outputs, and Performance Metrics](#);
  - The applicant’s approach, encompassing the Project RFA and ability to provide technical assistance, to involve the target communities in addressing community-specific Environmental Justice concerns through the GLEJGP;
  - Evidence of how the award projects will be either community-

	<p>driven or community-led; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the applicant’s planned process for handling project changes, e.g., partner changes or disputes, with input from the community.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Environmental and Programmatic Results</b></p>	<p><b>Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Environmental, Programmatic, and EJ Results:</b> The applicant demonstrates the ability to support multiple types of metrics throughout the lifetime of the cooperative agreement, including <b>(10 points)</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A detailed overview of how the projects will connect to and improve implementation of the GLRI AP III;</li> <li>• Identification of the GLRI-specific Measures of Progress supported by the initial project and identified subawards; and</li> <li>• The proposed outreach strategy for ensuring communication of project results among the target community/communities; award subrecipients; GLRI partner organizations; and the broader Great Lakes region;</li> <li>• Identification of the EJ metrics supported by the initial project and identified subawards including (but not limited to) required measures;</li> <li>• Describe how the Project RFA will respond to identified community needs;</li> <li>• Describe a strategy to monitor and evaluate the outputs and outcomes of the Project Subrecipients’ projects; and</li> <li>• Explain how the Project RFA will support and/or engage existing community-level efforts to address disproportionate and adverse environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts, that have affected and/or currently affect the target community/communities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Outputs and Outcomes:</b> The applicant demonstrates capacity to support compliance with outputs and outcomes (results) reporting, considering <b>(10 points)</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The measurable short-term and long-term EJ and GLRI results (environmental and programmatic) the funded</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>20</p>

	<p>projects will achieve;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How progress will be measured by the applicant in achieving the expected results;</li> <li>• How the applicant will ensure compliance with rules for reporting environmental and/or programmatic output, outcome, and GLRI-specific metrics for the recipient and subrecipients;</li> <li>• How the applicant will work with subrecipient organizations to address delays, issues, and/or other changes to management actions;</li> <li>• How negotiated metrics will be collected from subrecipients and reported to EPA, including how the Principal Recipient will ensure consistency in metrics reporting; and</li> <li>• How the applicant will solicit, incorporate, and adapt to feedback from the target community/communities throughout the lifetime of the award;</li> <li>• How the Principal Recipient will develop and employ an evaluation plan that includes adaptive management tools, techniques, and/or products to continually improve EJ and GLRI-specific outcomes throughout the course of the award.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Programmatic Capability in Environmental Justice</b></p>	<p><b>Applications will also be evaluated on the extent and quality to which:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The applicant illustrates an understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities facing underserved communities in the Great Lakes region experiencing and/or affected by adverse and disproportionate environmental and human health risks or harms, including <b>(5 points)</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insight into how existing efforts to address disproportionate environmental and human health risks are succeeding; need improvement; or can be improved;</li> <li>• The specific approaches proposed to address them through this opportunity and how the applicant’s efforts will support GLRI AP III goals as described in <a href="#">Section I.C</a>;</li> <li>• The applicant’s understanding of “underserved community”, including community-level environmental justice concerns, as related to their proposed GLEJGP and how this understanding will be used in Project RFA application solicitation, review, and selection process. Note that definitions of “environmental justice” and “underserved community” must be in accordance with EPA guidance (Justice40, EO, etc.); e.g., race may not be used in the application solicitation, review, and selection process.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>30</p>

**Programmatic Capability  
in Environmental Justice**

2. The applicant’s experience, familiarity, and capacity to engage with communities, including the identified target communities experiencing or affected by adverse and disproportionate environmental and human health risks or harms, by **(10 points)**:
  - Connecting with local organizations, leaders, and other members of the target community;
  - Achieving buy-in of key leaders in communities experiencing or affected by adverse and disproportionate environmental and human health risks or harm; and
  - Communicating with and, as necessary, educating affected underserved community members to ensure their ability to effectively and equally participate in discussion, plans, and projects pertaining to local environmental issues; and
  - Meeting the language needs of community members.
  
3. The application addresses disproportionate and adverse environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts in target communities, such as **(5 points)**:
  - Confronting the economic challenges and/or adverse health impacts resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial and/or other actions which affected and/or currently affect the target community; and
  - Illustrating how the program will further reach affected underserved populations in the target community described in [Section I.C.](#) of the solicitation and within the scope of the GLRI AP III.
  
4. The program’s approach to engaging and involving the target community or communities, including **(10 points)**:
  - The applicant’s knowledge and relationship to the affected underserved communities that have experienced a lack of resources and/or other impediments toward addressing the impacts identified above;
  - The extent to which the program prioritizes the fair treatment and engagement of the target community or communities, especially residents who will be directly affected by the program and project(s); and
  - The extent to which the applicant involves/will involve community members directly impacted by the program and project(s) who are members of historically excluded groups and/or who are members of multiple historically excluded groups who may face further marginalization within the

	<p>community, such as people with disabilities or elderly persons.</p> <p><i>Note: Disproportionate and adverse environmental, human health, climate-related and other cumulative impacts related to the scope of the GLRI AP III, as well the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts, may result when greater pollution burdens and/or consequences, and the impact of them, are more likely to affect or have affected the underserved communities described in this solicitation. The impacts may result from various factors including but not limited to being a function of historical trends and policy decisions.</i></p> <p><i>Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts as referenced above include: differential proximity and exposure to adverse environmental hazards; greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards; unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status; cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes; and degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation. Please visit <a href="#">Section I.B.</a></i></p> <p><i>For information and additional considerations on EPA’s EJ work with federally-recognized tribes and Indigenous peoples, please visit:</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-tribes-and-indigenous-peoples">https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-tribes-and-indigenous-peoples</a></p> <p><i>As a reminder, small tribes and underserved unincorporated communities may not appear on traditional mapping tools such as EJScreen. Efforts to conduct targeted outreach hard-to-reach communities to identify communities who need key infrastructure projects and social activities is encouraged.</i></p>	
<p><b>Past Performance</b></p>	<p><b>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed program considering:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The applicant’s past performance in successfully completing and managing assistance agreements identified in response to</li> </ol>	<p>15</p>

	<p><a href="#">Section IV.D.</a> of the solicitation <b>(3 points)</b>.</p> <p>2. The applicant’s history of meeting the reporting requirements under each assistance agreement identified in response to <a href="#">Section IV.D</a> of the solicitation, including <b>(3 points)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements;</li> <li>• The extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements; and</li> <li>• if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported or not, and why progress was not made.</li> </ul> <p>3. Organizational experience in successfully planning for and executing management actions, <i>i.e.</i>, milestones chart and progress monitoring, as well as management action plans for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed program <b>(3 points)</b>.</p> <p>4. Specific applicant staff expertise, qualifications, and knowledge; <i>or</i> detailed plans for applicant staff to obtain the required expertise, qualifications, and knowledge to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed program <b>(3 points)</b>.</p> <p>5. Experience in managing subawards subject to <a href="#">2 C.F.R. Part 200</a>. Applicants may include experience managing subawards for non-federal grants to provide additional evidence of subaward management <b>(3 points)</b>.</p> <p><i>Note: In evaluating applicants under Items 1 and 2 of this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and will 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).</i></p> <p><i>If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information for federal grants, please provide information about any award management for relevant previous grants.</i></p> <p><i>If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance, this must be indicated in the application which will receive a neutral score for these subfactors; 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, or if EPA identifies previous grants to your organization, EPA will perform the review based on information in its grant records.</i></p>	
<b>Transferability of Results</b>	<p><b>Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they:</b></p> <p>1. Include a detailed plan to gather and develop information to respond to and communicate lessons learned from the proposed</p>	15

	<p>GLEJGP-building activities, including <b>(8 points)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying a detailed means of adaptative management approaches, including trust-building and ground-truthing, to be employed during the project period, including means of accepting, and, when possible, incorporating feedback from community members who are most impacted by the undertaken project or projects during the lifetime of the award;</li> <li>• Documenting and distributing results, including information materials and analyses, in a timely manner to EPA and to key partners in the Great Lakes region and other appropriate audiences;</li> <li>• Ensuring subrecipients are available to present or report on their subaward activities as needed;</li> <li>• Being available to present results both during and after the life of the award;</li> <li>• Describing resources and strategies that the Principal Recipient has in place to successfully pivot and adapt based on lessons learned in real time; and</li> <li>• Describing a communications plan for the Principal Recipient to communicate with EPA and subrecipients about progress or issues in real time.</li> </ul> <p>2. Propose a strategy to promote, grow, and sustain the GLEJGP by <b>(7 points)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating and mentoring participants in sustained partnering and implementation efforts, as well as in innovative solutions and approaches; and</li> <li>• Communicating and transferring the successes and lessons learned of the project subawards through vigorous outreach via traditional and new channels.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Budget Narrative</b></p>	<p><b>Applications will be evaluated on the strength and clarity of the provided budget narrative and cost-effectivity measures, and the organizational plans for ensuring timely expenditure of awarded funds, including:</b></p> <p>1. The proposed budget narrative <b>(5 points)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a detailed breakdown of all proposed costs and their application within the Narrative Proposal; and</li> <li>• Establishes the reasonableness, necessity, and allowability of all proposed costs.</li> </ul> <p>2. The applicant establishes that the application is cost-effective,</p>	<p>15</p>



	<p>including consideration of factors such as <b>(10 points)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational costs, indirect costs, and overhead;</li> <li>• Subaward costs compared with anticipated results of projects;</li> <li>• Prudent cost-allocation over the life of the award and consistency with proposed budget detail (by year and overall); and</li> <li>• Ability to perform tasks within the operational range of budgets provided in this RFA.</li> </ul> <p>3. The applicant clearly outlines the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be disbursed and/or expended in a timely and efficient manner within the project period, such as (but not limited to): specific software, management actions, and/or applicant staff expertise. <b>(5 points)</b></p>	
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**V.C. Review and Selection Process**

Applications will first be evaluated against the Threshold Eligibility Criteria listed in [Section III.C](#). Only those applications which meet all the threshold criteria will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by a review panel composed of federal agency staff.

Final funding decisions will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decision, the selection official will consider the review panel rankings and recommendations and may also consider program priorities and geographic representation.

**VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.**

**VI.A. Award Notification**

EPA anticipates successful applicants will be notified by telephone, electronic, or postal mail. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or to the project contact listed in the application. This notification informs you that your application has been selected and is being recommended for award. It is **not** an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made the EPA Region 5 Grants Office. Only a grants management officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. Selection does not guarantee an award will be made since issues discovered during the award process may affect EPA’s ability to make the award to an applicant. In addition, a successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., workplan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants management officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.