

**AGENCY:** U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)  
Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR)

**TITLE:** Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program (EJ TCGM)

**ACTION:** REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

**TYPE:** INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NO:** EPA-R-OEJECR-OCS-23-03

**ASSISTANCE LISTING NO.** 66.615

**DATES:** ANNOUNCEMENT DATE: February 23, 2023  
CLOSING DATE: May 31, 2023

**DEADLINE:** Application packages must be submitted on or before **May 31, 2023, at 11:59 PM (Eastern Time)** through Grants.gov. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

**Note** - Prior to naming a contractor (including consultants) or subrecipient in your application as a “partner”, please carefully review Section IV.d, “Contracts and Subawards”, of EPA’s Announcement Clauses that are incorporated by reference in this announcement (See Section I.G). EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements as well as EPA’s rule on Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in EPA Programs in 40 CFR Part 33. The Agency does not accept justifications for sole source contracts for services or products available in the commercial marketplace based on a contractor’s role in preparing an application.

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## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. Executive Orders and Definitions

EPA is issuing this solicitation to request applications for the design and management of a new Environmental Justice (EJ) competitive pass-through program where EPA will competitively select multiple pass-through entities to provide grant funds via subawards to community-based nonprofit organizations and other eligible subrecipient groups representing underserved and disadvantaged communities. The definition of the term *Pass-through entity* in 2 CFR 200.1 provides that a pass-through entity is a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. The EPA provides extensive guidance to pass-through entities in the EPA Subaward Policy and related materials available on the EPA internet website.

EPA plans to award cooperative agreement(s) to pass-through entities (referred to as **Grantmakers** by the program) who will collaborate with EPA to design and build their own processes to receive and evaluate competitive community project applications from communities for **EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant activities**. These activities consist of assessment, planning, and/or project development activities addressing local environmental and/or public health issues. Grantmakers will provide **EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants** (i.e., subawards) to **Eligible Subrecipients**.

For regulatory purposes, the “Subgrants” referred to in this Notice of Funding Opportunity will be *Subawards* consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR 200.1 and comply with EPA’s [Subaward Policy](#). Grantmakers will be *Pass-through entities* as that term is defined in 2 CFR 200.1 and used throughout 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500 as well as EPA’s Subaward Policy. Eligible Subrecipients are those entities who are eligible to receive pass-through grant funding from a Grantmaker. These awards will help transform disadvantaged and underserved communities into healthy, thriving communities capable of addressing the environmental and public health challenges they have historically faced, as well as current and future challenges. Additionally, these awards are part of the Federal Partnership supporting the [Thriving Communities Network](#) initially funded through the environmental Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022.

This competition is being launched in order to meet the goals and objectives of two Executive Orders (EO 14008 and EO 13985) issued by the Biden Administration that demonstrate the EPA’s and Administration’s commitment to achieving environmental justice and embedding environmental justice into Agency programs.

[Executive Order 14008](#), Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, issued on January 27, 2021, affirmed the Administration’s commitment to advancing environmental justice (EJ) by

creating the Justice40 Initiative. The Justice40 Initiative<sup>1</sup> establishes a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments—including those in climate change; clean energy and energy efficiency; clean transit; affordable and sustainable housing; training and workforce development; the remediation and reduction of legacy pollution; and the development of critical clean water infrastructure—flow to disadvantaged communities<sup>2</sup>. In addition, Section 219 of the Executive Order stressed that environmental and economic justice are key considerations to factor into governmental decision-making and that transforming disadvantaged communities—historically marginalized, underserved, and overburdened—into healthy, thriving communities, and undertaking robust actions to mitigate climate change while preparing for the impacts of climate change across rural, urban, and Tribal areas are governmental priorities. The Executive Order also called for making environmental justice part of Agency missions by developing programs, policies, and activities to address the disproportionately high and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts on disadvantaged communities, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts.

Complementing Executive Order 14008, is [Executive Order 13985](#), Advancing Racial Equity And Support For Underserved Communities Through The Federal Government, issued on January 20, 2021, which stated that the federal government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality

[“Environmental justice”](#), which is the common theme of these two Executive Orders, is defined by the EPA as the *fair treatment* and *meaningful involvement* of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. *Fair treatment* means that no one group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal environmental programs and policies.

*Meaningful involvement* means that:

- People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
- The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
- Community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and
- Decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on J40 can be found in OMB's interim implementation guidance for the Justice40 Initiative [\(M-21-28\)](#).

<sup>2 2</sup> EPA is currently in the process of defining the term “disadvantaged communities.”

The underserved and disadvantaged communities for which these projects are focused on include, as defined by Executive Order 13985, “populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life...”. This includes communities such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; children, the elderly, members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. For purposes of this RFA, “underserved communities” also includes “environmentally overburdened communities” (that is, communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental, climate and human health harms and risks including remote, rural, and urban communities), and disadvantaged communities.

### **Community-based Nonprofit Organizations (CBOs)**

For this RFA, the EJ Grants program defines a “community-based nonprofit organization” (CBO) as a *public or private nonprofit organization that supports and/or represents a community and/or certain populations within a community through engagement, education, and other related services provided to individual community residents and community stakeholders. A “community” can be characterized by a particular geographic area and/or by the relationships among members with similar interests and can be characterized as part of a broader national or regional community where organizations can be focused on the needs of urban, rural, and/or tribal areas, farmworkers, displaced workers, children with high levels of lead, people with asthma, subsistence fishers, and other similar groups.*

## **B. Background and Objectives**

The mission of the EPA is to protect human health and the environment for all people with an emphasis on assisting those communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental, climate, and human health harms and risks. Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, EPA received significant investments for environmental justice and in the health, equity, and resilience of these, and all communities, to address past, current, and future environmental health and justice challenges. Additionally, the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) created the Environmental and Climate Justice block grant program in section 138 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and provided EPA with \$2.8 billion in grant funding for the program for projects to benefit disadvantaged communities. To maximize these significant investments, new and innovative strategies and approaches for issues such as community engagement and participation in environmental programs, equitable distribution of financial resources, capacity-building and outreach, and technical assistance and training to enhance access to financial assistance<sup>3</sup> opportunities and promote effective grants management and performance, are necessary. This is especially true for underserved and disadvantaged communities that have, and continue to be, plagued by environmental pollution and health, and environmental justice, challenges.

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<sup>3</sup> Financial assistance includes grants and cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements will be awarded under this RFA, but the terms are used interchangeably in the RFA.

One such strategy is to alleviate much of the burden the federal grants process places on small, resource-constrained **community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs)** supporting underserved communities and marginalized populations. The federal grants registration and application submission process can be a significant barrier to entry for those communities and CBOs who are most in need. Additionally, the awards process (i.e., the time it takes for a successful federal applicant to actually receive the funding) can be very time-consuming in which the awarded funding may not be made available to grantees for 6 months or more. Underserved communities and organizations need access to funds and resources quickly, and a lengthy awards process can significantly impact the long-term sustainability of a CBO. By increasing the access CBOs have to funding, as well as reducing the burden of the federal grants application process, underserved communities will be better positioned to advance and address environmental justice issues nationwide. This will lead to progress towards achieving the objectives of Executive Orders 13985 and 14008.

Historically, underserved communities have been disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards and health consequences and have faced environmental and energy justice challenges. These communities are often exposed to unhealthy land uses, poor air and water quality, dilapidated housing that leads to lead exposure, and other environmental threats that drive health disparities. Many of these communities are also surrounded by social inequities such as job insecurity, underemployment, linguistic isolation, underperforming schools, noise pollution, crowded homes, face high energy burden or fossil fuel dependence, and lack access to healthy foods and transportation. In addition, they often lack adequate resources and experience to navigate complex Federal grant application and award making processes and have been limited in their ability to have meaningful access to, and participation in, governmental decision-making processes that affect them, including those relating to environmental health and justice. The combination of environmental risks and social inequities creates a cumulative, disproportionate impact that hinders optimal environmental health and justice particularly for these communities.

Consistent with EPA's mission and Administration priorities, including those set forth in Executive Orders 13985 and 14008, and using funding available for environmental justice, and other potential funding as available and appropriate, EPA is seeking applications from eligible entities as described in Section III to become an Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaker. EPA is making available up to approximately **\$550 million** total for the EJ TCGM program. EPA expects to make up to 11 awards for the Grantmakers.

**History of EJ Small Grants Program** - The EJ Small Grants program (assistance listing 66.604) is the Agency's longest standing environmental justice grants program specifically designed to address the needs of underserved communities and marginalized groups through the provision of direct funding to address local environmental and/or public health issues impacting communities. Historically, the Agency has managed the EJ Small Grants directly which necessitated that grassroots groups and capacity-constrained organizations navigate the federal SAM.gov and Grants.gov process to apply for small funds. EPA has determined that a pass-through model will be a more effective approach to providing smaller funding amounts to communities for the initial development of their environmental justice projects. The pass-through model removes the requirement of applying through the federal grants process and decreases the amount of time it takes to award federal funds. The competition to select the pass-

through entities (Grantmakers) is issued under assistance listing 66.615, Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program. Moving forward, much of the assessment, planning, and project development work formerly conducted under the EJ Small Grants program will now be managed by the Grantmakers under the new EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants program.

**EJ Small Grants Program → New EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants Program** - The Grantmakers will design and manage the new EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants program, in collaboration with EPA, as a pass-through competitive subaward program. The Agency provides extensive guidance to pass-through entities in the EPA Subaward Policy and related materials. EPA will award cooperative agreements with Grantmakers who will collaborate with EPA to design and build their own processes to receive and evaluate competitive community project applications from communities for EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants for projects and capacity building efforts addressing local environmental and public health issues.

The EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant application process will be separate from the federal grants application process. Applications for the Grantmaker awards should include a clear description of the proposed streamlined process for competitively receiving, evaluating, selecting and awarding subgrants, working with EPA to monitor performance as well as a plan for managing these transactions in compliance with regulatory requirements. EPA will evaluate applicant proposals describing this process under the Section V evaluation factors.

The pass-through entities (Grantmakers) that administer the cooperative agreement and subgrants will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds, reporting on the overall progress and deliverables of the program, providing regular status reports and updates on the progress of all subgrants and will serve as the main point of contact for all subrecipients. As provided in 2 CFR 200.332, subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for completing workplan and project deliverables including proper use of EPA funding. Subrecipients receiving an EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant will also be expected to provide regular project reports to their Grantmaker which will be shared with EPA. EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants will be available for three distinct phases of community-readiness: Phase I subgrants will be for one-year up to \$150,000 assessment projects, Phase II subgrants will be for 1-2 year up to \$250,000 planning projects, and Phase III subgrants are for two-year up to \$350,000 project development projects. Applications should address how these phases will be carried out.

**NOTE:** This RFA is not for applicants to apply for an EJ Small Grant directly from EPA. This RFA is a competition to select the pass-through entities who will manage their own EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants program in collaboration with EPA over the next 3 years. Those applicants seeking funds to conduct a community project in a specific community may not apply to this competition.

**Priority for applications from Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)** - EPA recognizes the important and historic role Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) serve in supporting communities, especially underserved communities around the nation. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including Minority Serving

Institutions (MSIs), as well as university business schools and business programs, to apply to become a Grantmaker under this opportunity.

For purposes of this RFA, the following are considered MSIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#).
2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at [American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities](#).
3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at [Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#).
4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions](#); and
5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at [Predominately Black Institutions](#).

The Grantmakers will be responsible for the following key activities and applicants should address them in their applications:

- 1) Designing a competitive application submission and evaluation process for community projects addressing local environmental and public health issues. The process must include an open call for applications where applicants can submit applications by established deadlines. The process should include a range of submission options including approaches accessible to communities and CBOs without reliable access to internet services and significantly minimize the burden on applying entities (as compared to the federal grant application process). The process should minimize the “time to award” for entities selected to receive subaward funding and the competitive application process should be up and running as quickly as possible. **NOTE** –As part of EPA’s substantial involvement, EPA staff may collaborate with Grantmakers on the preliminary design of the submission and evaluation process, the development of evaluation criteria, and, where capacity allows, EPA staff may, at the request of the Grantmakers, be included as reviewers of applications. However, the final decisions on the submission, evaluation process/criteria, and selection of subrecipients will be made by the pass-through entity, rather than by EPA, provided statutory, regulatory, and Subaward Policy requirements are met.
- 2) Developing communications plans and conducting outreach activities (e.g., hosting conference calls and webinars and conducting in-person outreach events to notify communities) to reach all disadvantaged and underserved communities to the maximal extent practical, especially urban, rural, and remote communities. Outreach activities should be focused on making potential Eligible subrecipients aware of the availability of the EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant funding, deadlines for submitting applications, tutorials to understand the application and subawards process, and opportunities to ask



questions. Applicants should also describe the processes and approaches to coordinate directly with the Regional and/or National [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers](#) (TCTACs), Brownfields Technical Assistance Centers, and EPA Environmental Finance Centers as it relates to outreach and communications.

- 3) Developing an efficient subgrant process to make funds available to selected applicants quickly, monitoring progress of fund expenditures in compliance with federal regulations, terms and conditions of cooperative agreements, and ensuring that all funds received by the pass-through entities are expended within the 3-year project period per the requirements of section 138(b)(1) of the CAA.
- 4) Designing and implementing a project management process, in collaboration with EPA, which includes quality project oversight for funding subrecipients and a tracking and reporting process that reduces reporting burden on community recipients.
- 5) Providing technical support to subrecipients to assist in data collection, tracking, evaluation, and reporting of information in alignment with achieving project outputs and outcomes. Applicants should consider including plans to coordinate with the [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers](#) (TCTACs) to help address technical support and assistance needs of subrecipients.
- 6) Managing the subgrant application in-take processes, evaluations, subgrants awarding process, subgrant oversight/management and project tracking for communities and/or subgrant funding recipients in one or more Geographic Areas. Details defining the Geographic Areas mentioned above are provided in [Section I.D.4](#).
- 7) Developing an approach to the Grantmaker role demonstrating participatory governance where one or more community-based nonprofit organizations is involved in the design and decision-making of the subgrants program. Example participatory governance activities could include advisory bodies composed of community-based nonprofit organizations that oversee and provide advice on the development of the subaward process. The participatory governance framework should describe controls for ensuring that representatives of community-based nonprofit organizations involved in the design and decision-making for the subgrants program do not have relationships with organizations competing for subgrants or receiving noncompetitive funding that create actual or apparent conflicts of interest. Note that Grantmakers may compensate representatives of community-based organizations who participate in the governance process with stipends to the extent permissible in EPA's Guidance on Participant Support Costs.
- 8) Developing an approach, after discussions with the EPA project officer, to provide a limited number of noncompetitive EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants for severely capacity-constrained communities and CBOs where these entities can receive funding and support from the Grantmakers without submitting a competitive application. The applicant's approach will include determining criteria to identify these severely capacity-constrained communities and CBOs. Grantmakers, rather than EPA, will select all subrecipients.
- 9) Disseminating EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant project results, feedback, and success stories through publicly available means.
- 10) Collaboratively working with EPA environmental justice staff, federal technical assistance providers (such as the [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers](#)), the [Environmental Finance Centers](#), [Technical Assistance for](#)



[Brownfields](#)) and other federal grants programs to provide guidance and support to communities seeking to address longstanding environmental injustices impacting their communities.

- 11) Other activities the successful applicant proposes to carry out and EPA agrees to fund that further the purpose of this Funding Opportunity.

EPA will make awards to up to 11 Grantmakers that coordinate nationwide coverage to provide support and funding opportunities to **Eligible Subrecipients** (i.e., those entities who are eligible to receive an EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant from a Grantmaker). The Grantmakers will serve as the contact for Eligible Subrecipients interested in applying for EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants and will be the contact for subrecipients of the EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants. As stated above, EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants will be available for three distinct phases:

Phase I = Assessment projects for up to \$150,000 for a one-year project period

Phase II = Planning projects for up to \$250,000 for a 1-2 year project period, and

Phase III = Project Development projects for up to \$350,000 for a two-year project period.

Eligible Subrecipients are as follows:

- Nonprofit organizations
- Community-based and grassroots nonprofit organizations
- Philanthropic and civic organizations with nonprofit status
- Tribal governments (both federally recognized and state-recognized) and intertribal consortia (i.e., a partnership between two or more tribes that work together to achieve a common objective.)
- Native American Organizations (includes Indian groups, cooperatives, nonprofit corporations, partnerships, and associations that have the authority to enter into legally binding agreements)
- Puerto Rico
- US Territories
- Freely Associated States (FAS) – including local governmental entities and local non-profit organizations in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Palau

Ineligible Subrecipients include:

- Individuals
- For profit businesses
- State governments

### **The Grantmakers will manage three phases of EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants**

Applicants must address all three phases in their applications. Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III Subgrants may address a wide range of environmental issues and consist of a variety of project types including (but not limited to) the following:

- Air quality & asthma
- Fence line air quality monitoring
- Monitoring of effluent discharges from industrial facilities
- Water quality & sampling
- Small cleanup projects
- Improving food access to reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Stormwater issues and green infrastructure
- Lead and asbestos contamination
- Pesticides and other toxic substances
- Healthy homes that are energy/water use efficient and not subject to indoor air pollution
- Illegal dumping activities, such as education, outreach, and small-scale clean-ups
- Emergency preparedness and disaster resiliency
- Environmental job training for occupations that reduce greenhouse gases and other air pollutants
- Environmental justice training for youth

Applicants who do not intend to make subawards under all three phases must include an explanation describing the reasoning behind the decision to focus on a subset of phases.

### **Phase I: Assessment**

Communities must gather information, assess, and understand the problem(s) before they can thoroughly develop a plan and then implement those plans to address and eventually resolve the problem(s). The Phase I EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants (managed by the Grantmakers) will be available for severely capacity-constrained community-based organizations and/or “entry-level” applicants to assist them during the initial steps of their work to address specific issues impacting them locally by conducting assessments of environmental and public health concerns. Typically, Phase I EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants will be for up to \$150,000 each for a one-year project period. Phase I projects can address multiple environmental issues (e.g., air quality, water contamination, toxic substances, etc.). The following is a list of the types of activities which may be considered by the Grantmakers for Phase I EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants. It is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not all inclusive.

- research (that is incidental to the project design)
- sampling
- testing
- monitoring
- investigations
- surveys and studies
- public education

**Fixed Amount Subawards for Phase I and Noncompetitive Subawards** - Successful Grantmakers may, but are not required to, use fixed amount subawards to fund all or part of the \$150,000 Phase I competitive planning subawards and must use fixed amount subawards for any noncompetitive \$75,000 subawards provided to **severely** capacity-constrained community based nonprofit organizations with limited capacity to carry out Federally

funded projects. (See Section I.D.1.c of the RFA for more details on the noncompetitive fixed amount subawards).

As provided in 2 CFR 200.1 *Fixed amount awards* are a type of subaward:

[U]nder which . . . a pass-through entity provides a specific level of support without regard to actual costs incurred under the [subaward]. This type of [subaward] reduces some of the administrative burden and record-keeping requirements for both the [subrecipient] . . . [and] pass-through entity. Accountability is based primarily on performance and results.

Additional information on fixed amount awards is available in [2 CFR 200.201\(b\)](#) and [2 CFR 200.333](#). Section 9.0 of EPA's [Subaward Policy](#) describes types of fixed amount subawards that EPA will approve. For example, EPA may approve fixed amount awards for training, community meetings or report development that are funded on a milestone completion or unit price basis. Note also that subawards for Phase I competitive planning subawards may be structured to include fixed amount components (e.g., per trainee fees for completed training courses or lump sum payments to conduct community meetings) and cost reimbursement payments for subrecipient program staff compensation as long as the fixed amounts do not duplicate payments made on a cost-reimbursement basis.

Applicants should describe what types of activities they will allow subrecipients to carry out under fixed amount subawards and their approach to pricing those agreements. EPA Project Officers will work with successful applicants to facilitate approval for fixed amount subawards, the process for which can be found in section E of EPA's [Subaward Frequent Questions](#). Any EPA cooperative agreement that includes fixed amount subawards will include a term and condition that specifies the regulatory requirements that EPA has waived pursuant to 2 CFR 200.102(c).

## **Phase II: Planning**

The Phase II EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants (managed by the Grantmakers) will be available for community-based organizations and other Eligible Subrecipients who already have a strong understanding of their local environmental and/or public health issues and are ready to formulate a community-wide plan to address those issues. Developing key cooperative partnerships with community stakeholders is an essential part of developing a community-wide plan and later implementing that plan. Therefore, partnership development will be a key aspect of the Phase II subgrants. Typically, a Phase II EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant will be for up to \$250,000 each for a 1 to 2-year project period. Phase II project activities can address multiple environmental issues (e.g., air quality, water contamination, toxic substances) and should also include plan formulation and partnership development activities to address those environmental issues. The following is a list of the types of activities which may be considered by the Grantmakers for a Phase II EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant. It is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not all inclusive.

- Planning
- Partnership-building

- Public outreach and education
- Coordination with community stakeholders to address environmental issues
- Training activities for community organizations and community members
- Projects and activities to spur community involvement (e.g., cleanups of vacant lots)
- Smaller land purchases and acquisitions that require less than half of the total amount of subgrant funding

### **Phase III: Project Development**

The Phase III EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants (managed by the Grantmakers) will be available for community-based nonprofit organizations and other Eligible Subrecipients who already have a strong understanding of their local environmental and/or public health issues, have already formulated a community-wide plan addressing those issues, and/or are now ready to develop the technical aspects of the project (i.e., implement the project on the ground). Developing key cooperative partnerships with community stakeholders is an essential part of developing a community-wide plan and later implementing that plan. Therefore, partnership development will be a key aspect of the Phase III subgrants as well. Typically, a Phase III EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant will be for up to \$350,000 each for a 2-year project period. Phase III projects can address multiple environmental issues (e.g., air quality, water contamination, toxic substances). The following is a list of the types of activities which may be considered by the Grantmakers for a Phase III EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant. It is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not all inclusive.

- Project Development
- Blueprints for construction or cleanup projects, schematics, and technical development
- Work to get permits in place directly related to an environmental project
- Smaller land purchases and acquisitions that require less than half of the total amount of subgrant funding
- Implementation of project plans
- Public outreach and education

To find the latest information about the EJ TCGM program, visit the following link:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-grantmaking-program>

### **C. Authority**

Congress provided EPA with both funding and expanded authority to further environmental justice through financial assistance programs in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103) and Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-238), which provided funding for environmental justice implementation and training grants. EPA has statutory authority to award cooperative agreements to eligible entities to stand-up programs and

processes to build the capacity of underserved communities and CBOs. EPA interprets the term “training” in these statutes to include capacity building activities such as technical assistance.

Additionally, in the IRA Congress codified the Environmental and Climate Justice Block grant program at CAA 138 and appropriated \$2.8 billion for grants authorized by CAA 138(b). Eligible activities are described in CAA 138(b)(2) and include: (A) community-led air and other pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation, and investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure and workforce development that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants; (B) mitigating climate and health risks from urban heat islands, extreme heat, wood heater emissions, and wildfire events; (C) climate resiliency and adaptation; (D) reducing indoor toxics and indoor air pollution; or (E) facilitating engagement of disadvantaged communities in State and Federal advisory groups, workshops, rulemakings, and other public processes. EPA interprets the term “community-led air and other pollution monitoring, prevention and remediation . . .” in CAA 138(b)(2)(A) to allow EPA to fund activities to address water pollution, drinking water contamination, pesticide contamination, toxic substance contamination, solid and hazardous waste contamination, and hazardous substance contamination as well as air pollution.

#### **D. Responsibilities of the EJ Thriving Communities Grantmakers**

The awards under this RFA will be for the pass-through subgrant program in which the EPA will award cooperative agreements for up to 11 pass-through entities (known as Grantmakers) who will collaborate with EPA to design application in-take, community outreach, application evaluation, subawards, and project tracking processes for projects proposed by Eligible Subrecipients for EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants for community projects and capacity-building efforts for CBOs. Grantmakers will make final decisions. Consistent with the objectives of this RFA, applicants should describe in their applications and workplan (See Section IV), and will be evaluated based on, the quality of their plans to carry out an EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant program. Eligible Subrecipients, especially from underserved communities and urban, rural, and remote communities, will be made aware of, and can access, the redesigned application, subaward, and project management processes. Applicants will also be evaluated on their plan and approach for competing the subawards to ensure it is designed to result in awards to a diverse group of subrecipients to meet the objectives of this RFA. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include the following activities, and any others they deem relevant, in their applications to meet the objectives of this RFA:

##### **1. Development of Application Submission, Evaluation, and Subgrant Processes**

Applicants should describe their plan and approach to make funds available to Eligible Subrecipients, particularly from underserved communities, communities in urban, remote and rural areas, and those with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints, as well as increasing awareness of the existence of the Grantmaker and the availability of EJ Thriving

Communities Subgrants. Information disseminated through outreach efforts should include at a minimum:

- a. Designing a competitive application submission and evaluation process for community projects addressing local environmental and public health issues. The process should include an open call for applications on a “rolling basis” where applicants can submit applications when the applicants are ready. The process should be accessible to communities and CBOs without reliable access to internet services and significantly reduce the burden on applying entities (as compared to the federal grants process).
- b. Development of an efficient subgrants process. Overall, the application, evaluation, and subgrant processes should minimize the “time to award” for entities selected to receive subaward funding. **EJ TCGM applicants should design their subaward process so that the average time it takes for applications to be submitted, evaluated, and awarded is under 6 months (at a minimum).** This timeframe will greatly benefit under-resourced CBOs and in some cases may be the difference between a CBO remaining in operation or dissolving. Additionally, the Grantmakers must develop a plan to ensure that all funds awarded to them are expended within 36 months of receipt of the initial award as required by CAA 138(b)(1) which limits project periods to 3 years. Thus, each applicant to the EJ TCGM program should make clear how they propose to make their subaward process efficient and effective in getting the maximal amount of funding to communities within the required timeframe. **NOTE** - For applicants applying to be a Regional Grantmaker (see geographic coverage details in [Section I.D.4](#)), the application **must** demonstrate that a minimum of 80% of the total funds proposed to be awarded to the Regional Grantmaker pass through to Eligible Subrecipients. Any application or submitted budget for a Regional Grantmaker award that does not demonstrate this 80% requirement will be deemed ineligible. This requirement does not apply for those applicants applying to be a National Grantmaker, as the National Grantmaker has additional coordination responsibilities in addition to subaward capabilities.
- c. Reserving a limited number of noncompetitive EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants for severely capacity-constrained communities and CBOs where these entities can receive funding and support from a Grantmaker without submitting a competitive application. These noncompetitive small subawards should be for a fixed amount of \$75,000 each and should be awarded in compliance with Section 9.0 of EPA’s [Subaward Policy](#) which describes types of fixed amount subawards that EPA will approve. As provided in the EPA Subaward Policy, EPA staff will not direct, recommend, or suggest that pass-through entities provide subawards to particular entities.
- d. Grantmakers should put policies in place that limit the number of times a particular Eligible Subrecipient can receive an EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant within a certain period of time. For example, a pass-through entity may decide that an Eligible Small Subrecipient may not receive more than two EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants within the 3-year period of performance for the Grantmaker or a shorter interval as deemed appropriate by the pass-through entity.

## **2. Communications Planning and Outreach Activities**

Applicants should demonstrate how they will provide substantive communication and conduct outreach to Eligible Subrecipients from underserved communities, communities in remote and rural areas, and community stakeholders with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints to facilitate their full participation in the new EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants Program. This should include describing the process and approach to coordinate directly with the Regional and/or national EJ Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC). Communications and outreach activities may include:

- a. Hosting pre-application conference calls, webinars, and/or in-person meetings accessible to all underserved communities to the maximum extent practicable, especially urban, rural, and remote communities, making them aware of the availability of the EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant funding, deadlines for submitting applications, guidance to aid in understanding the Grantmaker's application and subawards process, and to give potential Eligible Subrecipients opportunities to ask questions.
- b. Developing mass mailers, online listservs, websites, printed materials, as well as conducting site visits and/or in-person workshops to communicate the goals and availability of the EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant funding.
- c. Ensuring communications and communication materials are available in multiple languages reflective of the needs in the target service area. Applicants should describe how they will provide translation and other interpretive services to make the information and funding available to those not fluent in English or that have limited English proficiency.
- d. Any other outreach and communications activities the Grantmaker believes will be effective in facilitating the participation of underserved communities, urban, rural and remote communities, and capacity constrained CBOs in funding programs for environmental justice and in the environmental decision-making process.

## **3. Development of a Project Management Tracking and Reporting System**

Applicants should describe their plan, approach, and process for project management including oversight for funding subrecipients and a system to track all projects and subrecipients of subaward funding and manage the subawards in compliance with the requirements specified in 2 CFR 200.332 and EPA's Establishing and Managing Subawards Term and Condition. Appendix D of EPA's Subaward Policy provides an optional template for a subaward agreement that meets regulatory requirements. Applicants should include a plan to develop a sophisticated system to monitor progress for each funding subrecipient and relay this information to EPA as required by the reporting terms and conditions of their EPA award. Additionally, applicants should describe their plan for subrecipient reporting, including how frequently reports will be required, the level of detail and format of those reports, and how those reports will be submitted by subrecipients. Applicants should also identify a process for engaging EPA assistance should any subrecipient require additional technical support to meet project deadlines or achieve progress. Applicants



should prioritize the goals of reducing burden on subrecipients while still providing reasonable and quality oversight as they are developing their plans for subrecipient reporting.

#### **4. Grantmaker Geographic Coverage**

As stated in Sections I and II, EPA intends to award up to 11 cooperative agreements under this RFA for up to approximately \$50 million each to be funded incrementally over a 3-year period of performance. EPA plans to award approximately 10 Regional Grantmaker awards and one nationwide award to a National Grantmaker who will provide coordination services for the Regional Grantmakers and fill gaps in coverage. Applicants can submit up to two applications under this RFA as long as each application is for a different Geographic Area, e.g., one for Regional Geographic Area #1 and one for Regional Geographic Area #2. Applicants may also submit one application for a Regional Geographic Area and another application for the National Geographic Area. Each application must be separately submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). If an applicant submits more than two applications, EPA staff will contact the applicant to identify which two applications EPA will consider. If an applicant submits two applications and is selected for two awards, EPA may, if appropriate, combine those selections into one award (See Section VI.D). Any questions about submitting multiple applications should be directed to the contact identified in Section VII prior to application submission. The geographic areas are:

- **Regional Geographic Area #1** includes *EPA Region 1* (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, and 10 tribal nations)
- **Regional Geographic Area #2** includes *EPA Region 2* (NJ, NY, PR, VI, and 8 federally recognized Indian Nations)
- **Regional Geographic Area #3** includes *EPA Region 3* (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV, and 7 federally recognized tribes)
- **Regional Geographic Area #4** includes *EPA Region 4* (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, and 6 tribes)
- **Regional Geographic Area #5** includes *EPA Region 5* (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI, and 35 tribes)
- **Regional Geographic Area #6** includes *EPA Region 6* (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX, and 66 tribal nations)
- **Regional Geographic Area #7** includes *EPA Region 7* (IA, KS, NE, MO, and 9 tribal nations)
- **Regional Geographic Area #8** includes *EPA Region 8* (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY, and 28 Tribal Nations)
- **Regional Geographic Area #9** includes *EPA Region 9* (AZ, CA, HI, NV, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, and 148 tribes)
- **Regional Geographic Area #10** includes *EPA Region 10* (AK, ID, OR, WA, and 271 native tribes)
- **National Geographic Area**

Applicants should design an approach to ensure that EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants are available to Eligible Subrecipients throughout the entire geographic area they are applying under, including to rural and remote areas.

Please note that the amount of funding provided to selected applicants will be commensurate with the level and amount of EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants to be provided under the award. Those selected applicants providing less EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants may receive lower amounts of funding than recipients providing greater amounts or serving a larger geographic area. **NOTE** - All applicants are encouraged to submit a project budget of \$50 million.

**Applications for National Geographic Area Coverage** – EPA is also interested in receiving applications for Grantmakers who will provide a number of subgrants nationwide to fill gaps and potential needs that other Grantmakers may not have the ability to cover. This nationwide service may especially be necessary in areas of the country where it may be more difficult to reach communities through more traditional channels. Potential areas of concern are remote areas of Alaska, rural areas of the U.S. Territories, areas along the US-Mexico Border, and remote parts of the contiguous United States. In addition to demonstrating how they will provide EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants to areas of the country where gaps may occur, applicants interested in being a National Grantmaker should demonstrate how they will coordinate services amongst the 10 Regional Grantmakers. These coordination services should include plans and approaches for project management, including oversight for funding subrecipients and a system to coordinate project tracking and reporting efforts between the Regional Grantmakers, National Grantmaker, and EPA. National applicants should have the ability to identify patterns related to community needs across regional geographic areas, synthesize best practices for all regional Grantmakers, and develop tools, databases, platforms, and/or clearinghouses to facilitate connecting Eligible Subrecipients to their Regional Grantmaker. Applicants for National Grantmaker awards may also propose approaches (e.g., periodic virtual meetings) to coordinate services by the Regional Grantmakers to promote consistency and achieve efficiencies, as well as provide common services such as training, technical assistance, and outreach tools to the 10 Regional Grantmakers.

Applicants selected for award in a particular geographic area may also provide with EPA's approval EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants to Eligible Subrecipients in other geographical areas. For example, a recipient may provide a subgrant to a CBO in a remote area outside its geographic area if it is uniquely qualified or has unique insight in working with that remote community, as determined by the EPA Project Officer. The final scope of work that EPA's Project Officer negotiates with successful applicants will specify the terms under which recipients may provide subgrants outside of their geographic areas.

Accordingly, it is expected that there will be multiple awards resulting from this competition and providing assistance outside of the geographic area of an award may be necessary. Applicants should describe how they would provide coverage outside the geographic area of their award, collaborate with other Grantmakers and federal, state, and local grant and subgrant programs to avoid duplication of effort, and share best practices among Grantmakers to maximize the value of the EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants provided to Eligible Subrecipients as envisioned by

this RFA. This may include such things as including links on their Grantmaker website to help prospective and existing Eligible Subrecipients determine which Grantmaker to access, and how to do so. Additionally, as provided in EPA's General Terms and Conditions "Copyrighted Material and Data" (a link to which can be found in Section VI of EPA's solicitation provisions-see Section I.G), EPA may authorize all Grantmakers to use copyrighted works or other data developed with Agency funds by other Grantmakers when such use promotes efficient and effective use of Federal grant funds.

**REMINDER** - For applicants applying to be a Regional Grantmaker, the application **must** demonstrate that a minimum of 80% of the total funds proposed to be awarded to the Regional Grantmaker pass through to Eligible Subrecipients. Any application or submitted budget for a Regional Grantmaker award that does not demonstrate this 80% requirement will be deemed ineligible. This requirement does not apply for those applicants applying to be a National Grantmaker, as the National Grantmaker has additional coordination responsibilities in addition to subaward capabilities.

## **5. Grantmaker Results, Success Stories, and Feedback**

To facilitate program effectiveness, applicants should describe an approach for documenting and measuring the success of their role as a pass-through entity (Grantmaker) and the success of the subrecipients receiving EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants. Grantmakers may include information on success stories attesting to the accessibility of the subaward application process, the ease of use to submit an application, the outreach conducted to make communities aware of the program, aggregated environmental and public health improvements, and more. A success story is generally one that demonstrates a subrecipient's project that successfully addresses longstanding environmental justice issues in a community.

Applicants should also describe an approach for seeking feedback on their Grantmaker from Eligible Subrecipients and prospective subrecipients, that includes their satisfaction with the Grantmaker and the subgrant program, ideas on ways to make the Grantmaker and subaward process more effective and what steps the applicant will take to address the feedback to improve their role as a pass-through entity. Applicants should make a concerted effort to obtain relevant feedback on their role as a Grantmaker from underserved communities and communities in urban, rural, and remote areas.

**Note about Surveys** - If the applicant intends to use EPA funds to develop and administer surveys or other information collections subject to 5 CFR Part 1320 for feedback, compliance with the OMB regulations implementing Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) by EPA will be necessary. Compliance with the OMB PRA regulations will require a considerable amount of time. Therefore, EPA strongly encourages applicants to obtain other sources of funds to develop and administer surveys related to their Grantmaker activities.

## **E. Ineligible Activities**

The following are examples of ineligible activities under the awards to be made from this RFA<sup>4</sup>

- Lobbying as restricted in 2 CFR 200.450.
- Legal advice, services, or representation
- Travel for federal employees
- Costs for other activities that are unallowable under 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E.

## **F. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outputs, Outcomes and Performance Measures**

This announcement supports key priorities of the Administration as detailed in [Executive Order 13985](#) signed by President Biden on January 20, 2021 titled, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, and [Executive Order 14008](#) signed by President Biden on January 27, 2021, titled *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. Specifically, the projects selected under this RFA will support the federal government's efforts to advance racial equity and environmental justice, address health outcome disparities, and support underserved communities.

In addition, pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," (see <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>), EPA must link assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA's current Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

The activities to be funded under this RFA support the [FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#). Awards made under this RFA will support Goal 2 (Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights), Objective 2.1, (Promote Environmental Justice and Civil Rights at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Levels) of the Strategic Plan which states that: *"Building Community Capacity and Climate Resilience and Maximizing Benefits to Overburdened and Underserved Communities: EPA will increase support for community-led action by providing unprecedented investments and benefits directly to communities with environmental justice concerns and by integrating equity throughout Agency programs."* Applicants should explain in their application how their Grantmaker proposal will further this goal and objective and they will be evaluated on this under the evaluation criteria in Section V.A.

EPA Order 5700.7 also requires that applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. An important aspect of the EJ TCGM program will be to document the capacity built and other changes achieved by both the subrecipients and the Grantmakers themselves, including sharing information about subrecipient successes and lessons learned, as well as the ability of the Grantmakers to respond to and meet the needs of communities most impacted by environmental injustices. Organizations applying to be Grantmakers must incorporate program evaluation activities from the outset of their program

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<sup>4</sup> This is not an exhaustive list of ineligible activities. All activities receiving EPA and DOE funding are subject to requirements for cost allowability in applicable regulations including limitations on consultant fees in 2 CFR Part 1500. Additionally, only activities described in the EPA approved scope of work are eligible for funding.

design and implementation to meaningfully document and measure their progress towards meeting project goals. Specific statements must be included that describe the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the goals and objectives described above.

**1. 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 or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of expected outputs from projects may include the following:

- The total number of Phase I applications received annually
- The total number of Phase II applications received annually
- The total number of Phase III applications received annually
- The total number of subawards made annually, including geographic distribution throughout the Regional Geographic Area and/or National Geographic Area
- Documented outreach efforts (e.g., webinars, in-person workshops, conference presentations) undertaken by an Grantmaker to make Eligible Subrecipients, especially in underserved communities and communities in urban, remote and rural areas aware of their services, including geographic distribution throughout the Regional Geographic Area and/or National Geographic Area
- Methods and tools developed by a Grantmaker to ensure that their subaward program is accessible to Eligible Subrecipients, especially in underserved communities and communities in remote and rural areas.
- Reports on feedback received from those who submit EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant applications and those who receive a subaward to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Grantmaker’s subaward program.
- Reports on program oversight, management and evaluations for measuring the success of a Grantmaker in meeting the objectives of this RFA as described above.
- Number of improvements made to an Grantmaker’s subaward program based on feedback from Eligible Subrecipients.
- Aggregated environmental and/or public health improvements in Regional Geographic Area serviced by the Grantmaker.
- Any other appropriate and relevant outputs identified by applicants that contribute to the objectives of this RFA.

**2. Outcomes.** The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that relates to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature; must be quantitative; and may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Additionally, outcomes should be organized by expected time period (short-term, intermediate, and long-term). Short-term outcomes refer

to changes in knowledge or attitudes and usually occur during the project period. Intermediate outcomes refer to changes in behaviors and actions due to the knowledge acquired and are usually measured within several months after the end of the project. Long-term outcomes refer to changes in conditions and are measured a year or several years after project completion. Short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes are related and build on one another. EPA encourages recipients to identify outcomes wherever possible because they lead to environmental and/or public health improvement more clearly than outputs. Examples of expected outcomes from projects may include the following:

- Increase in number of residents who know how to access local air quality information
  - Increase in number of communities who have access to reliable data specifically about the environment issues impacting their community
  - Increase in number of communities with a community-wide plan in place to tackle environmental and public health issues
  - Increase in partnerships between community stakeholders
  - The reduction of waterborne pollutants in local waterbodies and/or increase in fish populations.
  - The increased ongoing communication to the underserved communities resulting in measurable risk reduction related to a specific environmental issue and communities' participation directly in that risk reduction.
  - Improved public health (e.g., lead, asthma, etc.) in community through taking actions that reduce exposure to environmental risks
  - Increased greenspace, green infrastructure and/or approaches to address extreme weather and flooding
1. **Short-term** (change in knowledge) – Increase in number of residents that know about indoor asthma triggers (during project)
  2. **Intermediate** (change in behavior) – Increase in number of residents that install and routinely check their home indoor air monitor (6 - 12 months after project)
  3. **Long-term** (change in conditions) – Reduction in asthma rates among community residents (2+ years after project)

**3. Performance Measurement Plan.** Applicants should describe how they plan to track and monitor their project performance and progress throughout the performance period including their success in meeting the expected outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes are critical components of an applicant's overall plan for measuring their project's performance. Applicants will be evaluated on the quality of their overall performance measurement plan including the proposed outputs, outcomes, and associated timeframes for achieving those results. Generally, higher quality performance measurement plans include specific target metrics where possible for both outputs and outcomes. The applicant's performance measurement plan will help gather insights, will be the mechanism to track successful progress, output and outcome strategies, and will provide the basis for developing lessons learned to inform future recipients.

The following questions are also useful to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the Grantmaker will achieve?
- How will the Grantmaker track “time-to-award” and maximize efficiency to make subawards?
- How does the Grantmaker measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?
- How will the Grantmaker provide project management and oversight on funded subaward projects? How will EPA be informed and involved?
- Are the projected outputs and outcomes specific and detailed? Are specific target measures included where possible? Are target measures reasonable and achievable within the project period and for the funding amount?

### **G. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Announcement**

Additional provisions that apply to sections III, IV, V, and VI of this RFA and/or awards made under this RFA, can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#). These provisions are important for applying to this RFA and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this RFA. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact listed in this RFA (usually in Section VII) to obtain the provisions.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION** [\(back to Contents by Section\)](#)

### **A. Funding Availability**

EPA anticipates awarding a total of approximately \$550 million in funding under this RFA. EPA expects to make up to 11 incrementally funded awards with periods of performance of three years with total funding of approximately up to \$50 million per award, with up to approximately \$16.5 million budgeted for each year. There will be one award for each Regional Geographic Area detailed in Section I.D.4 plus one award for a National Grantmaker. Depending on funding availability, the quality of applications, satisfactory progress, and other applicable considerations. The specific number of awards and the amounts may vary from these estimates. For example, if an applicant submits two applications, one for Regional Geographic Area #1 and one for Regional Geographic Area #2 and is selected for award to cover both geographic areas, then EPA may combine both awards into one award to that single entity.

For application submission purposes, applicants should prepare budgets for up to \$50 million over three years with up to approximately \$16.5 million budgeted for each year. The amount of incremental funding available in subsequent years will depend on funding availability, satisfactory progress, and other applicable considerations with the understanding that EPA’s Project Officer will negotiate the amount of the final budget based on these considerations.



## **B. Number, Type, and Period of Performance of Anticipated Awards**

It is anticipated that up to 11 awards will be incrementally funded under this RFA, one for each Geographic Area. The awards for selected proposals will be in the form of cooperative agreements because the EJ TCGM program requires substantial involvement and interaction between the applicant and EPA. 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:

- Collaboration on the development of Evaluation Criteria to be used to evaluate applications from Eligible Subrecipients although Grantmakers will make the final decisions.
- EPA staff participation in competitive selection panels or reviewing proposal submissions at the request of Grantmakers to the extent permissible in section 10.0(b) of the EPA Subaward Policy
- Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
- In accordance with the Procurement Standards in 2 CFR Part 200, review of proposed procurements;
- Reviewing qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- Review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications and/or education, outreach and training tools and materials prepared (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).
- EPA staff participation in monitoring performance and/or providing technical support for subrecipients that require additional technical assistance to meet project and/or workplan deliverables

EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient or subrecipients. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

Applicants should plan for the period of performance of three years with awards to begin on **November 1, 2023**. All awards are subject to the availability of funds, the quality of the applications submitted, and other applicable considerations.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions of the proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicant or affect the basis upon which the application was evaluated and selected for award, thereby maintaining the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA also reserves the right to make additional awards under this RFA, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions. Additional and future funding for awards under this RFA is contingent on the availability of future appropriations.

### III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION [\(back to Contents by Section\)](#)

**Note:** Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#).

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

The entities eligible to apply under this assistance listing and serve as an EJ Thriving Communities Grantmaker are as follows:

- a community-based nonprofit organization (includes philanthropic organizations and community foundations); or
- a partnership of community-based nonprofit organizations\*
- a partnership between\*— a federally recognized tribal government and a community-based nonprofit organization
- a partnership between\*— an institution of higher education and a community-based nonprofit organization;

#### **B. Partnerships**

Below are several terms defining the multiple relationships that will be managed through the Grantmaker awards. Applicants should use these terms in their applications to define the types of relationships and collaborations that will play a part in their work as a Grantmaker:

- **Statutory Partnerships\*:** For the purposes of the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants programs authorized by section 138 of the Clean Air Act and other funding available under this RFA, a “statutory partnership” is defined as a formal relationship between two or more community based nonprofit organizations (CBOs), or between an Indian tribe and a CBO...or between an institution of higher education and a CBO that is memorialized in writing and is legally binding under applicable law. This formal relationship must include a subaward to a partnering CBO. Therefore, an applying organization that is not itself a community-based nonprofit organization must provide a subaward to one or more community-based nonprofit organization(s) to be eligible to receive a Grantmaker award.

The statutory partnership agreement must be signed by both parties and specify which member of the partnership will enter into the assistance agreement with EPA for the purposes of accountability for the proper expenditure of federal funds, performance of the assistance agreement, liability for claims for recovery of unallowable costs incurred under the agreement and must specify roles in performing the proposed scope of work for the assistance agreement. For purposes of this RFA, the direct recipient of the EPA funds must be a CBO, federally recognized tribe, or institution of higher education and the

CBO partners must receive the funds from the direct recipient as subawards if the CBO will not be the direct recipient of funding from EPA. Thus, a statutory partnership must include a subaward agreement from the direct recipient of EPA funds to the partnering CBO(s). As a policy matter, the statutory partnership agreement must also at a minimum specify the roles and responsibilities of each statutory partner (direct recipient and subrecipient) in the overall project.

The statutory partnership agreement must be documented in the application with a **signed Letter of Commitment** from the community-based nonprofit organization who will receive funding directly from EPA or the subaward. Additionally, signed Letters of Commitment from the partnering CBO(s) must indicate a subaward agreement is planned to establish the statutory partnership. The statutory partnership agreement must also at a minimum specify other roles and responsibilities of each partner, including how the priority environmental and public health issues of the disadvantaged communities being served by the partnership are identified and selected for projects and activities, as well as the role of community leaders in the decision-making processes and implementation of the proposed Grantmaker projects for funding. **NOTE** – Applicants are not required to include the final statutory partnership agreement as a part of their initial application but must include the necessary details as expressed above if a subaward is present. EPA will require that applicants selected for funding consideration provide copies of the executed final statutory partnership agreement to EPA’s Project Officer for submission to the EPA Award Official prior to award. Multiple statutory partnerships with CBOs are encouraged.

- **Collaborative Pass-through Relationships:** These relationships are subawards to other nonprofits (non-CBOs), units of government, institutions of higher education, and/or medical service providers not covered by a statutory partnership (as defined above). The Grantmaker will utilize these collaborative pass-through relationships to assist in the direct development and implementation of the EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants program. Subawards to local governmental entities and hospitals to assist the Grantmaker in its outreach to local communities is an example of these types of collaborative pass-through relationships. **NOTE**- These collaborative pass-through relationships are not the same as the EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants that each Grantmaker will make directly to Eligible Subrecipients throughout the 3-year project period. The subgrants are denoted with the term subgrants and are for the explicit purpose of Eligible Subrecipients performing direct work in communities addressing Assessment (Phase I), Planning (Phase II), and/or Project Development (Phase III) needs.
- **Procurement Relationships:** These relationships are for the acquisition of goods and services from for-profit firms and individual consultants. All procurement relationships must be established in compliance with the competitive requirements in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500 as interpreted in the Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements.
- **Program Participants:** These are individuals receiving stipends, travel assistance or subsidies/rebates for purchasing services/products for environmental stewardship.

Workshop participants and focus groups are examples of program participants as are representatives of community-based organizations who participate in the governance process described above.

- **Collaborative In-Kind Relationships:** These relationships are agreements between entities to cooperate to achieve common goals/objectives that do not involve transfers of EPA funds.

For this RFA, the EJ Grants program defines a “community-based nonprofit organization” (CBO) as a *public or private nonprofit organization that supports and/or represents a community and/or certain populations within a community through engagement, education, and other related services provided to individual community residents and community stakeholders. A “community” can be characterized by a particular geographic area and/or by the relationships among members with similar interests and can be characterized as part of a broader national or regional community where organizations can be focused on the needs of urban, rural, and/or tribal areas, farmworkers, displaced workers, children with high levels of lead, people with asthma, subsistence fishers, and other similar groups.*

Consistent with the definition of *Nonprofit organization* at 2 CFR 200.1, the term “nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. ***Institutions of Higher Education as defined in 2 CFR 200.1 may only apply for funding in statutory partnership with one or more community-based nonprofit organizations as required by section 138(b)(3) of the Clean Air Act.*** For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible. Eligible nonprofit organizations may, but are not required to be, exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code. Workforce Investment Boards and organized Labor Unions that meet these criteria may be eligible community-based nonprofit organizations if they qualify based on criteria specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Nonprofit 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. For-profit organizations or proprietary trade schools are also not eligible to apply.

The following entities are **INELIGIBLE** to receive an award to be a Grantmaker (i.e., pass-through entity) under this RFA:

- state and local governments and their agencies and instrumentalities;
- US Territories and possessions
- hospitals;

- quasi-governmental entities (e.g., water districts, utilities);<sup>5</sup>
- for-profit businesses
- International organizations
- Individuals

### **C. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds**

No cost-sharing or matching is required as a condition of eligibility under this competition.

### **D. Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

All applications must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., B., C., and D. to be considered eligible for award. 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. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this RFA or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. In addition to any page limitations, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence with respect to such things as font type and size.

2. Initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this RFA (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this RFA. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this RFA to ensure that their application is properly and timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in the Section IV.A grants.gov instructions, which includes both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

3. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov). An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission

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<sup>5</sup> Generally, a quasi-governmental entity is one that: (1) has a close association with the government agency, but is not considered a part of the government agency; (2) was created by the government agency, but is exempt from certain legal and administrative requirements imposed on government agencies; or (3) was not created by the government agency but performs a public purpose and is significantly supported financially by the government agency.

outside of Grants.gov. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Jacob Burney, [Burney.Jacob@epa.gov](mailto:Burney.Jacob@epa.gov) as soon as possible after submission —failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed

**DO NOT WAIT! Register in SAM.gov and Grants.gov as soon as possible. Finalizing these registrations could take a month or more. You do not want a late registration to prevent you from being able to properly and timely submit your application through Grants.gov.**

4. Applications must be written in English only. Applications written in languages other than English will be deemed ineligible for funding.

**5. Minimum Percentage of Funds that must pass through to Communities:** For an application for a Regional Geographic Area to be deemed eligible, it must demonstrate that a minimum of 80% of the total funds proposed to be awarded to the Grantmaker pass through to Eligible Subrecipients. Any Regional Geographic Area application and/or related submitted budget that does not demonstrate this will be deemed ineligible. For example, a \$50 million award must have a minimum of \$40 million budgeted for Eligible Subrecipients. **Subaward funds must be accounted for in the “Other Costs” budget category.**

**NOTE** – For applications submitted for the National Geographic Area Grantmaker, the 80% minimum percentage of funds passing through to communities is not applicable. The National Grantmaker will be responsible for coordination services amongst all regional Grantmakers, as well as providing a number of subgrants to fill gaps. Therefore, it is in EPA’s interest to allow those applying to be National Grantmakers to utilize more flexibility in how they allocate their proposed funding between subawards and coordination services.

5. Ineligible Activities: If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, including but not limited to those described in Section I.E, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding. Subawards made to 501(c)(4) nonprofit organizations that lobby are not allowed.

6. Each application must be for one of the geographic areas listed in Section I and should include coverage for the entire geographic area. Applications that do not address one of the geographic areas or address more than one geographic area will be deemed ineligible.

7. Multiple Applications: Applicants can submit up to two applications under this RFA so long as each application is separately submitted and is for a different geographic area(s) (e.g., an applicant cannot submit two applications for geographic area 1). If an applicant submits more than 2 applications, EPA staff will contact the applicant to identify which 2 applications EPA will consider. Notwithstanding the above, an applicant may be a partner on another application from another eligible organization.

8. Applicants must address all three phases of subgrants in their applications as described in I.B. Applicants who do not intend to make subgrants under all three phases must include an explanation describing the reasoning behind the decision to focus on a subset of phases.

#### **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION** ([back to Contents by Section](#))

**Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#).**

##### **A. Requirement to Submit through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures**

###### 1. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this RFA based on the grants.gov instructions below. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception from applying through Grants.gov for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined [here](#). Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with submissions with respect to this RFA only are addressed in section 3, *Technical Issues with Submission*, below.

###### 2. Submission Instructions

###### a. SAM.gov (System for Award Management) Registration Instructions

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will need to create an account using [login.gov](#)<sup>6</sup> to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registration includes obtaining an Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Question](#) on the difference for additional details.

Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business

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<sup>6</sup> Login.gov a secure sign in service used by the public to sign into Federal Agency systems including SAM.gov and Grants.gov. For help with login.gov accounts you should visit <http://login.gov/help>.



(EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your SAM.gov account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm ET.

**b. Grants.gov Registration Instructions**

Once your SAM.gov account is active, you must register in Grants.gov. Grants.gov will electronically receive your organization information, such as e-Business (EBiz) point of contact email address and UEI. Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active Grants.gov registration. Grants.gov registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal grant before, please review the [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#) instructions. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, the EBiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to members of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in Grants.gov. Please review the [Intro to Grants.gov-Understanding User Roles](#) and [Learning Workspace – User Roles and Workspace Actions](#) for details on this important process.

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the application submission deadline.

Contact [Grants.gov](#) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) to resolve technical issues with Grants.gov. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

**c. Application Submission Process**

To begin the application process under this RFA, go to [Grants.gov](#) and click the red “Apply” button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.

The electronic submission of your application to this RFA must be made by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance. If the submit button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization’s EBiz point of contact or contact [Grants.gov](#) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants need to ensure that the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the UEI listed on the

application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

#### Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than **May 31, 2023**, at 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through Grants.gov does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

### 3. Technical Issues with Submission

If applicants experience technical issues during the submission of an application that they are unable to resolve, follow these procedures **before** the application deadline date:

- a. Contact the Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
- b. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- c. Send an email with **EPA-OEJECCR-OCS-23-03** in the subject line to [burney.jacob@epa.gov](mailto:burney.jacob@epa.gov) **before** the application deadline time and include the following information:
  1. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
  2. Description of the issue
  3. The entire application package in PDF format

Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit the application prior to the application submission deadline time and date because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov.

### 4. Application Materials

**The following forms and documents are required under this RFA:**

**Mandatory Documents:**

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report (Please see these [Useful Tips](#) for completing this form)
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Workplan, prepared as described in Section IV.B below. Please note the page limit that applies to the Workplan identified below.
6. Use the Other Attachments Form for the following additional mandatory documents:
  - Itemized Budget Sheet (See below in Section IV.B.2 and optional template in Appendix A)
  - Partnership Letters of Commitment (unless you are proposing a project with no partners) (See Section IV.B.1 below)
  - Resumes of the Project Manager (PM) and other key personnel (See Section IV.B.3 below)
  - Sample Draft EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant Project Proposal Guidance Sheet

Note: The “Other Attachments Form” is listed under the mandatory documents but should be used to attach both the mandatory documents listed above in 6 as well as any optional documents under 6.

**B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

The forms and documents required as part of the application submission are described in Section IV.A above. Below are the instructions for the Workplan and several other application documents.

**1. Workplan:** The Workplan is one of the most important parts of the application package and describes the work to be performed during the performance period. Under this RFA, applicants must submit a Workplan for a federal award that addresses how the applicant’s Grantmaker will meet the objectives of this RFA, perform the activities and provide the services described in Section I of the RFA (the Eligible Services), and ensure that it addresses the evaluation criteria in Section V.A and any applicable threshold eligibility criteria in Section III. The Workplan must not exceed (25) single-spaced typewritten pages and be on letter size pages (8 1/2 X 11 inches). Any pages beyond twenty-five (25) pages will not be read by the review panel. It is recommended that applicants use a standard font (e.g., Times New Roman, Calibri, and Arial) and a 12-point font size. While these guidelines establish the acceptable type size requirements, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the application. Other attachments such as resumes, partnership letters, itemized budget template, sample draft subaward recipient proposal templates, and information on endowment size and/or yearly

organizational budget can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 25-page Workplan limit.

Workplans must address the information described above. Make sure they also include the following information which is part of the 25-page Workplan page limit:

**a. Project Summary Page** – Recommended not to exceed one page and include:

- Project Title
- Project Geographic Area-See Section I.D.4
- Applicant Information (name, address, main contact information)
- Brief Description of Applicant Organization -- Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization, including its mission and key ongoing projects/activities in which it is involved.
- Is your organization a qualifying Minority Serving Institution? (Yes/No) See Section III.A.
- List of Community-based Nonprofit Partners (if applicable)
- Project Abstract -- Brief description of the main objective, activities, and outputs/outcomes of the project, including the specific geographic areas of focus.

**b. Partnerships, Collaborations, Participatory Governance, and Letters of Commitment** (See evaluation factor V.A.1.c)

Given the nature of this program and the requirements under CAA 138, partnerships and collaborations with other interested stakeholders in performance of the project will likely be necessary and, for certain entities, required to carry out the role of an Grantmaker. If an applicant is eligible without partners and believes they can effectively serve in the role of a Grantmaker without partners, then they must be able to convincingly demonstrate in their application how they can effectively perform the role of a Grantmaker without any partners or collaboration.

All letters of commitment for partnerships and collaborations must be submitted by the applicant with its application package by the submission deadline. The letters of commitment must be included as other attachments in the grants.gov application package (Section IV.A) and are not subject to the 25-page workplan limit. The letters of commitment should include information about the role and activities each partner will play in establishment and operation of the Grantmaker as well as any resources the partner will provide. The letters of commitment must be signed by the partnering organizations. Do not include generic letters of support or recommendation. Regardless of the source, generic letters of support will not be considered in evaluating applications. If no letters of commitment are included, then it will be assumed the applicant has no partners and they must demonstrate how they can effectively perform the project and operate as an Grantmaker without partners or collaboration.

For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards under this grant program but may receive procurement contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial

assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 CFR 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants. Refer to the [Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. **Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a “partner” or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements.**

Note: If you intend to fund a named or unnamed partner’s participation in the project your application must describe how the proposed financial transaction complies with applicable requirements in 2 CFR Part 200, EPA’s Subaward Policy, the Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements or EPA Guidance on [Participant Support Costs](#). Note that naming a contractor (including a consultant) as a “partner” does not relieve the applicant from complying with competitive procurement requirements. EPA does not accept sole source contract justifications for professional services (including environmental consulting services and consulting services on preparing grant applications) that are available in the commercial marketplace.

#### **c. Schedule of Activities**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include a table in the application to represent the timeframes for the initiation and completion of project activities. See Criteria 2.a. in Section V.

#### **d. Past Performance**

Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements that your organization performed within the last three years. Assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements, but not contracts. **NOTE** – The funding amount of each assistance agreement, as well as the purpose of each assistance agreement should be included. **Applicants are encouraged to list agreements similar in size, scope, and/or purpose to the Grantmaker awards.** List no more than 5 agreements. For the agreements you list, 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.A, 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 your organization does not have any available past performance experience related to federal and/or non-federal assistance agreements, you should state this explicitly in your application (e.g., *Our organization has no*

*past grants experience.*) Including this statement will ensure you receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). However, if you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

**2. Itemized Budget Template (Optional template available in Appendix A):** Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amount for each project component/activity. Identify the requested federal dollars. Applicants should budget for up to \$50 million total with approximately \$16.5 million per year over 3 years. Keep in mind that EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions of the proposed projects. Clearly explain how the funds will be used. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. All subaward funding, including a minimum of 80% of total funding allocated for Eligible Subrecipients, should be located under the “other” category (this requirement is not applicable for those applying to be National Grantmakers). This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget such as other costs and contractual costs. Provide itemized costs with sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of costs for each workplan component/activity. Where necessary, your itemized budget sheet should include a budget narrative to make it clear how you determined/calculated the costs for each budget category.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f), recipients that do not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate under 10% are eligible for a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs for all Federal awards. Please see EPA’s IDC Policy: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/documents/indirect-cost-policy-for-recipients-of-epa-assistance-agreements.pdf> for full details. Note that as provided in 2 CFR 200.332 subrecipients who do not have current negotiated indirect cost rates may also use the 10% rate but that pass-through entities may not force subrecipients to use the 10% rate rather than their negotiated rate.

Total estimated costs in the itemized budget template should reflect federal funding only. Applicants are permitted to attach the itemized budget template as an “Other Attachment” to their application and it will not count against the 25-page workplan limit. Applicants will not be penalized if they choose not to use the budget template.

**3. Resumes of the Project Manager (PM) and Other Key Personnel:** Applicants should attach a resume or curricula vitae (CV) for the PM and other key personnel named on the Key Contacts List. These are not subject to the Workplan page limit although individual resumes should not exceed 2 pages in length.

**4. Sample Draft EJ Thriving Communities Subgrant Project Proposal Guidance Sheet:**

Applicants should attach a sample draft project proposal guidance sheet to illustrate what information may be requested from potential subrecipient applicants for projects. These are not subject to the Workplan page limit and total guidance sheet should not exceed 10 pages in length. **NOTE** - Page length of subrecipient proposals will likely depend on which phase of

subgrants the Eligible Subrecipient is applying for. For example, Eligible Subrecipients applying for Phase I (Assessment - 150,000) subgrants will likely have shorter proposals than those applying for the Phase III (Project Development - \$350,000) subgrants.

### C. Pre-Application Webinars and Frequently Asked Questions

Applicants are invited to participate in webinars with EPA to address questions about the Grantmaker Program and this RFA. Interested persons may access the webinars listed in the table below. Additional information including a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, webinar links, and webinar recordings can be found at the following website: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-communities-pass-through-funder-program>

Currently, as shown in the table below, there will be two webinars in November 2022. Webinar dates and times may be subject to change, so please refer to the web links in this section to have the most up-to-date information:

Date	Time (Eastern Time)	Zoom Webinar Information
March 16, 2023 (EJ TCGM Live Webinar)	2:00pm - 4:00pm ET	<b>Zoom Webinar Format</b> - Applicants may ask general questions about this RFA. Additional information about the structure of this webinar and log-in information can be found at the link below:  <a href="https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-grantmaking-program">https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-grantmaking-program</a>

A recording of the webinar will be posted at the link above along with presented materials. If necessary, EPA may schedule additional webinars. 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. 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 the announcement. In addition, EPA will respond to questions about whether a proposed project appears to meet the criteria for eligibility for consideration for these awards.

## V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION ([back to Contents by Section](#))



**Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#).**

**A. Merit Evaluation Criteria**

Eligible applications that pass the threshold eligibility review described in Section III.C will be reviewed and scored by a review panel(s) comprised of EPA staff and subject matter experts using the criterion below. The maximum total number of points is 100. Please note that certain sections are worth more points than others.

Applicants must ensure that their Workplan and application materials address the evaluation criteria below. Applications will be scored based on how well they address the following ranking criteria:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Total Points</b> <b>100</b>
1.0	<b>Program Objectives</b> Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they address program objectives (Section I of the RFA) by demonstrating:		<b>44</b>

a.	<b>Program Design: Community Application In-take and Evaluation Processes</b>	<p>How well the applicant designs the processes described in Section I of the RFA to operate as a Grantmaker. This includes evaluating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant’s plan and approach for designing competitive community application in-take and evaluation processes and ensuring those processes include submission options accessible to all Eligible Subrecipients throughout the entire geographic area covered. Applicants should describe how they plan to compete and evaluate applications received for both the Phase I (Assessment), Phase II (Planning), and Phase III (Project Development) subgrants. Applicants should also describe how they will make clear the three different phases of subgrants available to Eligible Subrecipients. Applicants should describe their plan to provide an open call for applications where Eligible Subrecipients can submit applications to the pass-through entity when they are ready. <b>(8 points)</b></li> <li>• The applicant’s plan and approach to develop a timely and efficient subaward process where all EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants can be awarded to selected subrecipients efficiently and effectively. <b>(4 points)</b></li> <li>• The applicant’s approach to managing awarded subawards including developing a Project Management Tracking and Reporting System for all subrecipient funding and projects and ensuring that subawards are managed in compliance with 2 CFR 200.332 and EPA’s Establishing and Managing Subawards General Term and Condition. <b>(4 points)</b></li> <li>• How the applicant will obtain, and incorporate as appropriate, feedback from Eligible Subrecipients and prospective subrecipients including those from underserved communities, including urban, rural and remote communities on the effectiveness of the pass-through entity and ways to improve the subaward program <b>(2 points)</b></li> <li>• How the applicant will make the subaward process described in Section I accessible to those not fluent in English <b>(2 points)</b></li> </ul>	20
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Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
b.	<b>Outreach to Underserved, Urban, Rural, Remote, Tribal and Capacity Constrained Communities throughout the Geographic Area</b>	<p>The applicant's approach for ensuring that the subaward process described in Section I is accessible to underserved communities, communities in urban, remote and rural areas, and community stakeholders with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints throughout the entire Geographic Area (see Section I.4.D) the applicant is applying to cover. This includes evaluating the quality and extent of the applicant's plan and approach for making these communities and community stakeholders aware of the existence of the Grantmaker and the subgrants program, how to access them, and how the program can be used to address local environmental and public health issues impacting underserved communities and marginalized populations throughout the Geographic Area. Applicants will also be evaluated on their plan to ensure that subgrants are equitably distributed and on their plan for ensuring that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) are highly prioritized elements in their outreach plans.</p> <p><b>(6 points)</b></p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Under this criterion an applicant will only score well if they demonstrate how all the entities described above, including communities in urban, rural and remote areas, will be made aware of the Grantmaker and the subgrants program and how to access them. Applications that focus on outreach and accessibility solely to, for example, underserved communities in metropolitan areas, will not score as well as applications that address all the communities and community stakeholders identified above.</p>	6

c.	<b>Partnerships / Collaboration / Participatory Governance / Letters of Commitment</b>	<p>How the proposed project for the Grantmaker includes collaboration with one or more community-based nonprofit organization partners (where required by the IRA statute) and other partners to operate an efficient and effective subgrants program to meet the objectives of this RFA and address environmental justice challenges facing Eligible Subrecipients and specifically underserved communities and communities in urban, rural, and remote areas throughout the Geographic Area. Applicants will be evaluated on the degree to which their proposed Grantmaker application demonstrates <u>participatory governance</u> where one or more community-based nonprofit organizations is involved in the design and decision-making of the subgrants program. Example participatory governance activities could include advisory bodies composed of community-based nonprofit organizations that oversee and provide thought partnership on the development of the subgrants process subject to policies that prevent actual or apparent conflicts of interest in the selection of subrecipients. This criteria will evaluate the planned roles of each partner listed in the application, how each partner will contribute to the effectiveness of the project, what resources and/or expertise each partner brings to the project, how the partner has a vested interest in working with this partnership (other than just getting income from a sub-award or contract), and the strength of the overall participatory governance approach. <b>(6 points)</b></p> <p>Eligible Applicants who do not propose partnerships or collaborations with others will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate that they can effectively and efficiently perform the project and operate a pass-through subaward program on their own without any collaborating partners.</p> <p>The quality of the letters of commitment submitted with the application. The letters will be evaluated with respect to whether they explain the partners' role with the Grantmaker and how it contributes towards the effectiveness of the pass-through subgrants program, what resources (funding, in-kind, technical assistance, support, expertise, etc.) the partners are bringing to the effort, how their participation will be financed, their interest in the pass-through subgrants program, and their expertise/experience in helping underserved communities and communities in urban, rural and remote areas. Generic letters of support that do not commit an organization or individual to specific activities will not be evaluated. <b>(2 points)</b></p>	8
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<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Total Points 100</b>
		<p><b>NOTE</b> - If no letters are submitted and the applicant proposes to perform the activities of the Grantmaker without any partners, they will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate that they can effectively and efficiently perform the project and operate a pass-through subgrants program on their own without partners.</p>	
d.	<b>Applicant's Historical Connection to Underserved Communities throughout the Geographic Area</b>	<p>The applicant will be evaluated on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their past and current work, collaborations, and relationships with underserved communities and communities in urban, rural and remote areas throughout the Geographic Area to address community challenges. The description should include some of the results of those efforts, and any current programs and initiatives the applicant is currently involved with to address the concerns of underserved communities and populations. <b>(4 points)</b></li> </ul>	4
e.	<b>Noncompetitive Fixed Amount Subawards and Limiting number of subawards to a single entity</b>	<p>The applicant will be evaluated on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their plan to reserve a limited number of fixed amount subawards for severely capacity constrained Eligible Subrecipients who may not be able to submit competitive grant applications. Applicants should describe the scope of these projects and the types of activities that these subawards will fund <b>(2 points)</b></li> <li>• Policies and procedures they plan to develop that will limit the number of EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants that a single entity may receive within a certain time period with the goal being to achieve the highest diversity and number of different subrecipients possible <b>(2 points)</b></li> </ul>	4

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Total Points 100</b>
f.	<b>Project Linkages</b>	<p>The extent and quality to which the proposed project activities support and advance EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 (Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights), Objective 2.1, (Promote Environmental Justice and Civil Rights at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Levels) <b>(2 points)</b></p> <p>Refer to link Below:  <a href="https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan">https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan</a> </p>	2

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Total Points 100</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Project Activities / Milestone Schedule / Detailed Itemized Budget Sheet and Budget Narrative</b> Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they:		<b>14</b>
a.	Schedule of Activities	Provide a clearly articulated and realistic schedule, including timeframes to initiate and perform project activities, and describe the plan and approach for establishing the subaward program to ensure that the Eligible Subrecipients, especially underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas, will be able to start applying for EJ Thriving Communities Subgrants and receiving funds as expeditiously as possible following award of the pass-through entity's cooperative agreement. <b>(4 points)</b>  Including a table in the application to represent the timeframes for the initiation and completion of project activities is strongly recommended.	4

Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
b.	Detailed Itemized Budget Sheet, Budget Narrative, and Cost Effectiveness of Budget/Project	<p>Demonstrate the reasonableness of the budget and allowability of the costs for each component/activity of the project. In addition, EPA will evaluate the cost effectiveness of the budget/project in terms of maximizing to the greatest extent practicable the delivery of funding and assistance to Eligible Subrecipients and prospective subrecipients, and specifically to underserved communities and communities in urban, rural and remote areas. <b>(10 points)</b></p> <p><b>NOTE</b> – A minimum of 80% of total EPA funding for Regional Grantmaker applications must be subawarded to Eligible Subrecipients. If an applicant does not meet this threshold, then the application will be deemed ineligible. This percentage requirement does <b>not</b> apply to those applicants applying to be a National Grantmaker.</p> <p><i>Applicants are permitted to attach the itemized budget sheet as an “Other Attachment” to their application so it will not count against the 25-page workplan limit. However, the budget narrative <u>should</u> be included in the body of the 25-page workplan and provide clear, explanatory detail about the itemized costs in the attached budget sheet. Both the itemized budget sheet and budget narrative should be specific and clear.</i></p>	10
3.	<b>Environmental Justice Results— Outputs, Outcomes, and Performance Measurement Plan.</b> Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which:		<b>6</b>
a.	Environmental Justice Results-Outputs/Outcomes	The applicant describes an effective plan for tracking and measuring their progress in achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs including those identified in Section I, and the expected project outputs and outcomes identified in the application are effective in achieving the program objectives listed in Section I of the RFA. <b>(6 points)</b>	6
4.	<b>Programmatic Capability</b> Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant’s ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering:		<b>24</b>



Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
a.	Organizational experience (of the applying organization)	Their organizational experience related to performing the activities described in Section I, or similar activities. The description should include any past instances where the applying organization stood up and/or managed their own Federal, State, or Tribal subaward program or similar programs funded privately. The description should include how long those programs lasted, as well as the results and effectiveness of those programs.	12
b.	Staff Experience / Qualifications	Whether they demonstrate they have the resources and staff (e.g., project manager and other key personnel) with the knowledge, expertise, and skills to efficiently and effectively establish and operate the pass-through subaward program	6
c.	Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds	Their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that subgrants will be awarded to subrecipients in a timely and efficient manner <u>and</u> that all grant funds awarded to the Grantmaker will also be expended in a timely and efficient manner while ensuring all costs are eligible and allowable. All funds must be expended within the statutorily mandated 3-year performance period. The applicant should provide a comprehensive description of what systems they currently have and/or will develop to move funding through their accounting systems and to Eligible Subrecipients quickly and in compliance with EPA's <a href="#">Subaward Policy and the Automated Standard Application Payments (ASAP) and Proper Payment Draw Down General Term and Condition of EPA Financial Assistance Agreements</a> .	6
5.	<b>Past Performance</b> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project based on their past performance with respect to the agreements listed by the applicant in the Workplan as required under Section IV.B.		12

Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
a.	List of Federally funded and/or Non-federally funded Assistance Agreements and Reporting History	<p>Applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.B. <b>(6 points)</b></li> <li>• History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.B 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. <b>(6 points)</b></li> </ul> <p>NOTE - The focus of this criterion is on the applicant's past performance, not that of any partners, subrecipients, contractors, etc. who may be assisting the applicant with performance of the project as a Grantmaker. In evaluating applicants under these factors, 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. <b>If you do not have any relevant or available past performance related to federal or non-federal grants, you should state this explicitly in your application (e.g., our organization has no relevant past grants experience.)</b> Including this statement will ensure you receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). Failure to include this statement may result in your receiving a score of receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p>	12

## **B. Review and Selection Process**

Applications will be reviewed and scored under the following process:

**1. Threshold Eligibility Review Process** – All applications will be evaluated for eligibility using the threshold eligibility criteria described in Section III.C by EPA Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR) staff.

**2. Review Panel and Evaluation Process** – Review panel(s) will review, score, and rank all eligible applications that pass the threshold eligibility review based on the merit evaluation criteria listed above. The review panel(s) will include EPA staff and may include external subject matter experts. After the evaluation process, the review panel(s) may participate in a conference call with subject matter experts before final selection recommendations, rankings, and evaluation results are presented to the Selection Official from OEJECR. The purpose of this call is to provide an opportunity for the review panel(s) to incorporate expertise outside of the reviewer panel. Any changes to the evaluations or scoring as a result of the call will be documented and will only be based on the evaluation criteria above.

**3. Final Selection Process and Other Factors** – The review panel will present final rankings and selection recommendations to the Selection Official, who will then make the final selections for award. In addition to this information, the Selection Official may also consider any of the following “other factors” in making final selection decisions from among the high-ranking applications:

- Priority for applications from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)
- EPA and OEJECR Programmatic Priorities.
- Availability of funds.

Accordingly, in making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the review panel rankings and recommendations, subject matter experts’ input based on their call with the review panel(s) and may also consider the other factors identified above including input from other government agencies and departments as described above. The “other factors” may only be considered by the Selection Official when determining final selections after the scoring and ranking process is complete.

### **C. Anticipated Announcements and Award Dates**

Below is a tentative schedule of important dates for the EJ TCGM program and this RFA. Please note that the dates are tentative and subject to change.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
February 23, 2023	RFA issued and open competition period begins.
March 16, 2023	Pre-application Assistance Webinar
May 31, 2023	Open competition closes. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov on or before 11:59 p.m. (ET) on May 31, 2023. Applications received after this date will not be reviewed.
June 2023	EPA will review applications for threshold eligibility purposes (Section III). Ineligible applicants will be notified via email with details regarding ineligibility. Notification to ineligible applicants will be sent via email to the

	contact identified on the submitted SF424 providing brief explanations on the reason(s) for ineligibility. Ineligible applicants may request a debriefing within 15 days of receipt of the correspondence (See debriefing and disputes clause in Section VI.I and m of the EPA Announcement Clauses referenced in Section I.G.)
July '23 – Sep. '23	EPA review panel(s) review, score, and rank eligible applications. EPA will make the final selections for awards. All applicants will be notified of the selection results by mail and/or email.
October 2023	OEJECECR will release a national announcement for selections.
Oct. '23 – Nov. '23	Headquarters/Regional offices will request any additional application documentation from selected applicants. Awards will be made by headquarters and/or regional grant offices as determined to be appropriate.
Nov. '23 – Dec. '23	Post-award coordination calls with awardees/selectees to coordinate Grantmaker coverage

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**[\(back to Contents by Section\)](#)

**Note:** Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#).

### **A. Award Notices**

EPA anticipates notification of selected applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by the end of September 2023. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the appropriate EPA Award Official. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail.

The successful applicant may be requested to prepare and submit additional documents and forms which must be approved by EPA before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

This award is subject to the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Title 2 CFR, Parts 200 and 1500. EPA also has programmatic regulations located in 40 CFR Chapter 1 Subchapter B.

A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-policies-and-guidance-grants>.

## **C. Reporting and Plans**

### **1. Progress Report/Final Report Requirement.**

The applicant's project manager will be required to submit quarterly progress reports for each 12-month reporting period throughout the duration of the agreement to update the EPA Project Officer on project progress. The project manager will also be required to have, at a minimum, quarterly calls/meetings with the EPA Project Officer to discuss progress. Precise terms and conditions, including frequency of calls/meetings, will be negotiated by EPA staff as part of the award process. The project manager will also be required to submit a Final Technical Report for EPA approval within 120 days after the end of the 12-month project period. A Financial Status Report is also required and will be described in the award agreement. The EPA may collect, review, and disseminate those final reports that can serve as models for future projects. Many applicants may find it useful to document their progress using various media. This may include, but is not limited to the use of videos, blogs and other forms of social media.

### **2. Justice40 Reporting**

The activities to be performed under the awards are expected to contribute to the President's goal that 40% of the overall project benefits flow to disadvantaged communities (the Justice40 Initiative - See Section I.A). Recipients, therefore, will be expected to report on certain metrics to demonstrate to what extent the activities contribute to the 40% goal. The award will include appropriate terms and conditions to this effect.

### **3. Quality Assurance – Management Plans (QMP) and Project Plans (QAPP)**

**Quality Management Plan (QMP):** To ensure that environmental information and data is collected within EPA guidelines, the recipient may need to complete a Quality Management Plan. The applying organization would need to provide training and oversight of quality assurance. This may include writing quality assurance project plans for subawardees or ensuring that subawardees are trained and can effectively manage environmental data collection within EPA guidelines. The QMP requires that the recipient (i.e., the Grantmaker), provide technical assistance, training, and oversight for quality assurance.

**Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP):** Quality assurance is sometimes applicable to assistance projects (see [2 CFR 1500.12](#)). Quality assurance requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources, such as databases or literature. Once the award is made, if a Quality

Assurance Project Plan is required for the project, the applicant will have to draft a QAPP prior to beginning work on the project. You must reserve time and financial resources in the beginning of your project in order to prepare your QAPP and include the cost for developing your QAPP in your Detailed Budget. Selected applicants cannot begin data collection until EPA approves the QAPP. **NOTE** - EPA Project Officers will work with all selected Grantmakers on quality assurance requirements.

#### **D. Combining Applications Into One Award**

If an applicant submits multiple applications under this competition, and is selected for multiple awards, EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines the separate applications.

### **VII. AGENCY CONTACTS** [\(back to Contents by Section\)](#)

<b>Main Contacts</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<i>Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights</i>		
Jacob Burney, OEJECR, EJ Grants Division Director	<a href="mailto:Burney.Jacob@epa.gov">Burney.Jacob@epa.gov</a>	202-564-2907

### **VIII. OTHER INFORMATION AND APPENDICES** [\(back to Contents by Section\)](#)

A – Optional Grantmaker Detailed Itemized Budget Sheet Template

## APPENDIX A

### Optional Grantmaker Detailed Itemized Budget Sheet Template

*Note—EPA provides detailed guidance on how to characterize costs for budgeting purposes as well as a budget detail example in the agency's [Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#). For a sample Itemized Budget Sheet refer to: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02>*

Year 1 of 3	Description	Total
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other (including subawards)		
Indirect Charges (Note that as provided in the definition of <i>Modified total direct costs</i> in 2 CFR 200.1 indirect cost rates		

may only be applied to the first \$25,000 of subawards.)		
		Total Year 1 Budgeted Costs = \$16,500,000

Year 2 of 3	Description	Total
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other (including subawards)		



Indirect Charges  (Note that as provided in the definition of <i>Modified total direct costs</i> in 2 CFR 200.1 indirect cost rates may only be applied to the first \$25,000 of subawards.)		
		Total Year 2 Budgeted Costs = \$16,500,000

Year 3 of 3	Description	Total
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other (including subawards)		

Indirect Charges  (Note that as provided in the definition of <i>Modified total direct costs</i> in 2 CFR 200.1 indirect cost rates may only be applied to the first \$25,000 of subawards.)		
		Total Year 3 Budgeted Costs = \$17,000,000

Overall Combined Budget (All Years)	Description	Total
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		

Other (including subawards)		
Indirect Charges (Note that as provided in the definition of <i>Modified total direct costs</i> in 2 CFR 200.1 indirect cost rates may only be applied to the first \$25,000 of subawards.)		
		Total Budgeted Costs (All Years) = \$50,000,000