

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

TITLE: Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2018 Request for Proposals for Support for both the Small Watershed and the Innovative and Nutrient Sediment Reduction Grant Programs

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP NUMBER: EPA-R3-CBP-18-01

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.466

IMPORTANT DATES

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11/22/2017	Issuance of RFP
01/15/2018	Proposal Submission Deadline (see Section IV for more information)
03/01/2018	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
04/02/2018	Approximate date for applicant to submit federal cooperative agreement application
06/01/2018	Approximate date of award

EPA will consider all proposals that are submitted via [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) on or before 11:59 pm EST on **January 15, 2018**. Any proposals submitted after the due date and time will not be considered for funding. No proposals will be accepted by facsimile or e-mail. EPA will only accept proposals submitted via Grants.gov, except in limited circumstances where applicants have no or very limited Internet access (see section IV.).

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) is announcing a request for proposals (RFP) for supporting both the:

1. Small Watershed Grants (SWG) program; and
2. Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) grants program.

The SWG program promotes community-based efforts to develop conservation strategies to protect and restore the diverse natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

The INSR grants program supports efforts within the Chesapeake Bay watershed that will vastly accelerate sub-watershed and/or regional scale implementation of nutrient and sediment reductions with innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches.

Applicants may apply for either or both activities. Applicants must submit a separate application for each activity if they apply for both. Applicants cannot submit more than one application per activity.

FUNDING/AWARDS: it is expected that grant awards may be issued for up to a six-year project period beginning June 1, 2018.

EPA plans to award one cooperative agreement for each activity under this RFP.

The total estimated funding for six years for supporting the SWG program is approximately \$30,000,000 to \$60,000,000, with an estimated \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 available for the first year and each additional year though there is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

The total estimated funding for six years for supporting the INSR grants program is also approximately \$30,000,000 to \$60,000,000, with an estimated \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 available for the first year and each additional year though there is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

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I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

1. *About the Chesapeake Bay Program*

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, the Chesapeake Bay Program is responsible for supporting the Chesapeake Executive Council through a number of actions, including the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The CBP partners include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tristate legislative body; EPA, representing the federal government; and participating citizen, local government, and scientific and technical advisory groups.

The Chesapeake Bay Program partnership (the Partnership) is guided at the direction of the Chesapeake Executive Council (Executive Council), which, through its leadership, establishes the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and exerts its leadership to rally public support for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection and signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection.

The Principals' Staff Committee acts as the senior policy advisors to the Executive Council, accepting items for their consideration and approval and setting agendas for Executive Council meetings. The Principals' Staff Committee also provides policy and program direction to the Management Board.

The Management Board provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program. It directs and coordinates the Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) and their respective workgroups.

The membership of the GITs and the Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting Team include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Thus, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and others become active members of the broad Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection partnership.

Pursuant to Section 117(b)(2) of the Clean Water Act, 33 USC 1267 (b)(2), the Chesapeake Bay Program Office is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the Executive Council in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay Program Office and Chesapeake Bay Program, both mentioned above, are two distinct entities.

2. 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

On June 16, 2014, the Chesapeake Executive Council, the Chesapeake Bay Program's governing body signed a new voluntary Chesapeake Bay agreement (referred to as *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* throughout this RFP) that will guide the CBP partnership's work into the future. For the first time, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia signed the agreement as full CBP partners in the overall effort. This agreement is one of the most comprehensive restoration plans developed for the Chesapeake Bay region, providing greater transparency and accountability of all CBP partners. With 10 interrelated goals and 31 outcomes, this watershed-wide accord advances the restoration, conservation, and protection of all the lands and waters within the 64,000-square-mile watershed by promoting sound land use, environmental literacy, stewardship, and a diversity of engaged citizens. Additionally, the goals and outcomes aim to better protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay's living resources, water quality, and vital habitats. The *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* also recognizes the unique and vital role local governments play and how they are essential to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

The cooperative agreement(s) to be awarded under this solicitation will help support all of the goals in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and further the following principles as stated in the Agreement: Operate with transparency in program decisions, policies, actions and reporting to strengthen public confidence in our efforts, adaptively manage at all levels of the partnership to foster continuous improvement, and engage citizens to increase the number and diversity of people who support and carry out the conservation, protection and restoration activities necessary to achieve the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

3. The Chesapeake Bay TMDL, WIPs, and the Midpoint Assessment

Pursuant to Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, 33 USC 1313(d), the EPA has established the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), a historic and comprehensive "pollution diet" with rigorous accountability measures to initiate sweeping actions to restore clean water to the Chesapeake Bay and the watershed's streams, creeks and rivers.

The Chesapeake Bay TMDL – the largest ever developed by EPA – identifies the necessary pollution reductions of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment across Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia and sets pollution limits necessary to meet applicable state water quality standards in Chesapeake Bay, its tidal tributaries and embayments. These pollution limits were further divided by jurisdiction and major river basin based on state-of-the-art

modeling tools, extensive monitoring data, peer-reviewed science and close interaction with jurisdictional partners.

Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) are plans for how each of the seven Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions (jurisdictions), in partnership with federal and local governments, will achieve their respective Chesapeake Bay TMDL allocations and planning targets. The Phase I WIPs were developed in 2010 by the jurisdictions to inform the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL waste load and load allocations. The Phase II WIPs were developed in 2012 by the jurisdictions to meet nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment planning targets based on updated information generated through CBP Partnership's Phase 5.3.2 Chesapeake Bay watershed model. The goal of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and supporting jurisdictional WIP process is to implement by 2025 all nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction and prevention measures needed to fully restore water quality in Chesapeake Bay and its tidal rivers.

The cooperative agreement(s) will help support the goals of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, WIPs, Midpoint assessment.

4. Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's Environmental Models and Decision-Support Tools

Models of the Chesapeake Bay's air shed, watershed, estuary, and living resources have been developed by the partners and linked together over the past 30 years. The CBP partnership's suite of models assists in understanding the important processes affecting the health of the watershed and the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. These modeling tools provide the Chesapeake Bay watershed state and local jurisdictions with an understanding of the effect of various control strategies on pollutant levels and the level of nutrient and sediment load reductions needed to restore the Chesapeake Bay and achieve the states' water quality standards for dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll *a*, underwater bay grasses and water clarity. By quantifying the management actions necessary to restore Chesapeake Bay habitats and the living resources dependent on those habitats, these integrated CBP partnership models decision-support tools provide guidance to environmental managers and citizens on where the most cost-effective reductions can be made so that controls are equitable and broadly supported.

The cooperative agreement(s) will result in sub-award project level BMP monitoring data, particularly in the INSR program which requires nutrient and sediment reduction, that will be reported to the CBP partnership's suite of model through the appropriate jurisdiction.

B. Scope of Work

This RFP is seeking cost-effective proposals from eligible applicants for supporting both the:

1. Small Watershed Grants (SWG) program; and
2. Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) grants program.

The successful applicant(s) for SWG and INSR are strongly encouraged to coordinate their tasks with each other.

The purpose of the SWG program is to promote community-based efforts to develop conservation strategies to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. The funding thresholds for the subawards under the SWG program are much lower than those of the INSR grants program because the intention of the SWG is to fund smaller and less costly projects at the community level to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay.

The purpose of the INSR program is to support efforts within the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed that will vastly accelerate sub-watershed and/or regional-scale implementation of nutrient and sediment

reductions with innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches. INSR subawards that are not made at the sub-watershed and/or regional-scale are discouraged and may only be made by exception.

Additionally, since the INSR program's purpose is to reduce nutrients and sediment, measurement must be a key component of the projects that will ultimately receive sub-award funding. BMP projects funded under INSR must provide data on the nutrients and sediment reduced.

Please note that a community outreach program or project to design a small demonstration bio-retention area in a highly visible community could be funded under SWG, but not INSR. The construction of a sub-watershed-wide or regionally designed and permitted BMP demonstrating a large-scale innovation, including a nutrient and sediment monitoring component, would be funded under INSR but not SWG.

The size of land mass to be addressed, the complexity of the regional effort, the larger funding level, the innovative nature, and the required proof of nutrient and sediment reduction means that the projects funded under INSR are generally more involved and complicated. Additional details about the two programs are described under Activities 1 and 2 below.

EPA plans to award one cooperative agreement for each activity under this RFP. The total estimated funding for six years for supporting the SWG program (Activity 1) is approximately \$30,000,000 to \$60,000,000, with an estimated \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 available for the first year and each additional year. The total estimated funding for six years for supporting the INSR grants program (Activity 2) is also approximately \$30,000,000 to \$60,000,000, with an estimated \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 available for the first year and each additional year. There is no guarantee of funding for either activity throughout the six-year period or beyond.

If your organization has an interest in this project, has the skills to accomplish one or both activities, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit a proposal. Each eligible proposal will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. Both activities are for multi-year projects (up to six years), so the proposal(s) must have a work plan for the six-year period, and a budget and detail for the first and outlying years. It is understood that the budgets for the outlying years will be estimates. Applicants may apply for either or both activities. Applicants must submit a separate application for each activity if they apply for both. Applicants cannot submit more than one application per activity.

For a proposal to be considered eligible for funding, substantive project-related work included in the proposal must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Activity 1: Support for Small Watershed Grants Program

Estimated Funding: \$5,000,000 – \$10,000,000 annually for six years (\$30,000,000 – \$60,000,000 total)

The Chesapeake Bay SWG program promotes community-based efforts to develop conservation strategies to protect and restore the diverse natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

The successful applicant for this activity will issue subawards to local governments and/or non-profit organizations working to improve the conditions of their local watersheds while building citizen-based resource stewardship. The successful applicant must comply with applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 and the EPA Subaward Policy, which may be found at http://intranet.epa.gov/OGD/policy/grants_policy_issuance_16_01.pdf, including the National Term and Condition for Subawards, which may be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-general-terms-and-conditions-effective-october-2-2017-or-later>.

This RFP is seeking cost-effective proposals from eligible applicants to manage the SWG program, which entails issuing RFPs, identifying appropriate sub-awardees, and monitoring their progress to ensure timely completion of projects. Sub-awardees would be those organizations that implement locally-based protection and restoration programs or projects within a watershed that complement EPA-established total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), including the creation, restoration, protection, or enhancement of living resources and habitats associated with the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Subawards should be for amounts ranging from \$20,000 to \$200,000. The successful applicant for this activity will coordinate these tasks with the successful applicant of Activity 2 to maximize the impact and efficacy of these two programs. Funds should be directed to subawards except for funds required to carry out the responsibilities below, or for communications, outreach, and administrative and technical assistance activities that directly support subawardees.

Responsibilities of the successful applicant under Activity 1 include but are not limited to the following:

- Administer the SWG program, including establishing guidelines for the program, advertising the program to all Bay stakeholders, issuing a RFP, coordinating the review of applications, selection of the subawardees, and assisting potential applicants with the subaward process.
 - The RFP will reflect the priorities of the CBP management strategies and outcome workplans.
- Actively search for ways to leverage EPA funding with other funding sources.
- Issue subawards to achieve the program objectives (as directed above) and environmental results through a competitive process that treats all applicants fairly.
- Ensure subaward activities meet the programmatic objectives of CBP.
- Present workshop(s) in appropriate locations in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to advertise the program and assist potential subaward applicants in a transparent manner that ensures that no applicant or group of applicants has an unfair competitive advantage during the competitions.
- Disburse monies to subaward recipients in a timely manner to avoid large unliquidated obligations and as required by the applicable grant regulations.
- Create a hands-on technical assistance program as a resource for sub-awardees.
- Provide project monitoring to support the successful implementation of all the subaward projects.
- Track the environmental results (successes and failures) of sub-awardees' various approaches to watershed management and ensure that the data and information are communicated and/or reported to the CBP and its jurisdictional partners.
- Organize and execute outreach programs for the SWG program, including a yearly event(s) to announce the selected sub-awardees as well as other events to promote and share the successes, lessons learned, and best practices from SWG projects.
- Ensure the transfer of information between, and networking among, the SWG and INSR grantee communities and other CBP restoration and conservation practitioners.
- Design and implement a communications program that ensures that each subawardee does outreach within their local community and to their stakeholders about the project, its benefits, and sources of funding.
- Completion of a third-party evaluation of this program is expected in 2018. The successful applicant will review that evaluation and implement recommendations as well coordinate the next-scheduled, third-party review.

Applicants should consider these activities as well as describe alternative approaches for managing an effective and successful SWG program.

Examples of activities to be performed by sub-awardees may include:

- Projects that support communities in developing and executing watershed implementation plans (WIPs), among other things, improving urban stormwater management.
- Projects that encourage the implementation and sharing of innovative, locally-based programs and projects that improve water quality and restore important habitats within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Projects that develop the capacity of local governments, citizen groups, and other organizations to promote community-based stewardship and enhance local watershed management, including underrepresented communities.
- Projects that promote a greater understanding of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the interrelationship between the health of the Bay and the condition of local watersheds.
- Projects that restore and protect vital habitats and encourage conservation on private lands through projects that engage local land owners.

Activity 2: Support for Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program

Estimated Funding: \$5,000,000 – \$10,000,000 annually for six years (\$30,000,000 – \$60,000,000 total)

This RFP is seeking cost-effective proposals from eligible applicants to support the INSR program to support efforts within the Chesapeake Bay watershed that will vastly accelerate sub-watershed and/or regional-scale implementation of nutrient and sediment reductions with innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches. All subawards issued under the INSR program will be required to develop, support and vastly accelerate implementation on a sub-watershed and/or regional-scale while also co-addressing other program aspects. Subawards that are not at the sub-watershed and/or regional-scale may be made by exception only and on a very limited basis.

The successful applicant for this activity will issue subawards to non-profit organizations, state and local governments, colleges, universities, and/or interstate agencies on a competitive basis to achieve the objectives of the INSR program, as described below. The recipient must comply with applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 and the EPA Subaward Policy, which may be found at http://intranet.epa.gov/OGD/policy/grants_policy_issuance_16_01.pdf, including the National Term and Condition for Subawards, which may be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-general-terms-and-conditions-effective-october-2-2017-or-later>.

The subawards will support demonstration, technology transfer, and effective dissemination and institutionalization of innovative approaches to expand the collective knowledge of the most cost-effective and sustainable approaches to dramatically reducing or eliminating nutrient and sediment pollution to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Therefore, the successful applicant must ensure that subawardees include measurable nutrient and sediment reduction. The successful applicant for this activity must coordinate these tasks with the successful applicant of Activity 1 to maximize the impact of these two programs.

The objective of the INSR grants program is to support efforts within the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed to: 1) accelerate sub-watershed and/or regional-scale implementation of nutrient and sediment reductions with innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches; 2) actively transfer and disseminate the lessons learned from the subaward projects to the wider Bay region stakeholder community; and 3) work to institutionalize the continued and expanded implementation of innovative nutrient and sediment reduction practices and approaches within the existing and emerging pollutant sectors.

Subawards should be for amounts ranging from \$200,000 to \$1,000,000. Recognizing a need to foster a balance of cost-effectiveness with innovation to achieve better and accelerated methods for pollution

reduction, for purposes of this RFP, EPA is defining "innovative" to include: (a) new technologies or techniques for reducing nonpoint nutrient/sediment loads to the Bay, (b) sustainable improvements in removal efficiencies and/or cost-effectiveness of current approaches, and (c) implementable projects at the sub-watershed and/or regional-scale (Subawards that are not at the sub-watershed and/or regional-scale may be made by exception only and on a very limited basis.). Funds should be directed to subawards except for funds required to carry out the responsibilities below, or for communications, outreach, and administrative and technical assistance activities that directly support subawardees.

Consistent with achieving the objectives described above, and the environmental results identified below and in Appendix A, activities to be performed by the grant recipient include

- Administer the INSR program, including establishing guidelines for the program, advertising to all Bay stakeholders, issuing a RFP, coordinating the review of applications and selection of subawardees, and assisting potential applicants with the subaward process.
 - The RFP will reflect the priorities of the CBP management strategies and outcome workplans.
- Issue subawards to achieve the program objectives (as described above) and environmental results through a competitive process that treats all applicants fairly.
- Ensure all subaward activities meet the programmatic objectives of the CBP.
- Present workshop(s) in appropriate locations in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including underrepresented communities to advertise the program and assist potential applicants in a transparent manner that ensures that no applicant or group of applicants has an unfair competitive advantage during the competitions.
- Disburse monies to subaward recipients in a timely manner to reduce unliquidated obligations and as required by the applicable grant regulations.
- Create and execute a hands-on technical assistance program.
- Conduct project monitoring to support and ensure the successful implementation of all subaward projects.
- Track, qualitatively and quantitatively measured nutrient and sediment reductions, environmental results (successes and failures) of the subaward projects; and ensure that the data and results are communicated and reported to CBP and its jurisdictional partners.
- Ensure subaward project results are disseminated and transferred for broad application in sectors and well positioned to influence and inform infrastructure changes.
- Design and implement a communications program that ensures that each subawardee does outreach within their local community and to their stakeholders about the project, its benefits, and sources of funding.
- Implement the recommendations and/or options from the 2017 third-party evaluation of the INSR program.
- Completion of a third-party evaluation of this program was done in 2017. The successful applicant will review that evaluation and implement recommendations as well coordinate the next-scheduled, third-party review.

The applicant's INSR program will be designed to cultivate projects whose goal is to develop, support and vastly accelerate implementation and on a sub-watershed and/or regional-scale while also addressing nutrient and sediment reductions with innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches. Focus should be placed on advancing efforts that help implement the states' WIPs and two-year milestones of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. In addition, these projects should lead to new knowledge in the development and transfer of leading-edge, inventive ways of approaching nonpoint and point source load reductions while also contributing knowledge of cost-effective, sustainable new ways of doing business.

Eligible activities that could be performed by the sub-awardees for the INSR program are described below. Applicants may also propose other types of activities for accelerating nutrient and sediment reductions in the Chesapeake Bay watershed with innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches. It is critical that each of the following be carried out through projects focused on the sub-watershed and/or regional-scale.

Stormwater (New and Existing Development):

- Provide technical assistance and capacity building for the adoption and implementation of local standards, ordinances, regulations, innovative restoration practices, and programs that promote and achieve the reduction of nutrient and sediment loads associated with stormwater runoff to restore or maintain predevelopment hydrology;
- Demonstrate how levels of stormwater control can be attained that achieve functional lift;
- Provide assistance to local governments for the development and implementation of stormwater utilities or other financing measures to support efforts in stormwater management; establish systems and/or institutions that support accountability and results reliably in stormwater management implementation;
- Establish other mechanisms or procedures that improve cost-effectiveness of implementing stormwater practices;
- Establish policies and/or programs that achieve significant and measurable reductions in nutrient loads from urban/suburban turf grass;
- Illustrate how targeting specific types of geographic locations of stormwater runoff and/or nutrient and sediment prevention or local government code/ordinances improvements in stormwater management or reduction controls could result in more effective ways to protect local waterways and clean up the Bay ecosystem.

Agriculture:

- Support the verification, technology transfer, dissemination, institutionalization, and expanded implementation of the next generation of tools and actions that will address the greatest agricultural challenges facing restoration of water quality in the Bay (as described in the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order Action Plan, the Bay Agreement Management Strategies and Outcome workplans, Bay TMDL and its associate WIPs and milestones, and EPA's Strategic Plan);
- Address key manure nutrient management issues (e.g., phosphorus saturation in soil, ammonia emissions, alternative uses for manure nutrients);
- Increase the implementation of nitrogen-use efficiency tools to better manage inorganic nitrogen inputs on cropland;
- Explore the social, economic, cultural, and technical implementation hurdles to, and opportunities for, making fundamental changes to the way we farm in the watershed to ensure the long-term sustainability of agriculture within the Chesapeake Bay watershed and a restored Bay ecosystem.
- Ensure coordination with the Department of Agriculture's Conservation and Innovation Grant (CIG) program to avoid duplication of effort and redundant subawards being issued by the INSR and CIG programs.

Emerging Source Sectors and New Technologies:

- Support the reduction of nutrients and sediments from other sectors that may represent emerging negative impacts to the Chesapeake Watershed (e.g., septic systems, resource extraction, legacy sediments, transportation-related activities).
- Support technology advancements and/or different applications of existing technologies that have been shown to yield proven or cost-effective reductions of nutrients or sediments, with opportunities for widespread implementation across the Chesapeake Watershed.

Annual CBP Funding Priorities and Targeted Watersheds/Geographies:

- Annually the CBP will have a focus on the priorities driven by the Bay Agreement Management Strategies and outcome workplans, the TMDL WIPs and mid-year assessments, the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order Action Plan, and the CBP environmental models and data. EPA participates as a CBP partner to ensure that the efforts are coordinated and consistent; the applicant will coordinate with EPA and CBPO to insure the current annual priorities are emphasized.

Obtaining Additional Information

For additional background information on the CBP achievements and commitments, see the CBP Partnership's website located at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/> or call 1-800-YOUR-BAY to receive information by mail.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs

1. Linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan

The overall objective of this competition is to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem through increased public awareness and public engagement in addressing water-quality restoration goals and Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts through the Small Watershed Grant Program (Activity 1) and the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grant Program (Activity 2) under Section 117(g)(2) and Section 117(d) of the Clean Water Act.

The FY 2018-2022 EPA Strategic Plan is currently in draft form and can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

The activities to be funded under this announcement are intended to further EPA's current priorities under Objective 1.2 of the draft plan to provide for clean and safe water by ensuring that waters are clean through improved water infrastructure and, in partnership with states and tribes, sustainably managed to support drinking water, **aquatic ecosystems, and recreational, economic and subsistence activities**. Applicants must explain in their proposal how their project will further these current priorities.

[EPA Order 5700.7A1](#) also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. Applicants must include specific statements describing 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 priorities described above.

2. Outputs

The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Expected outputs for each activity to be funded under this announcement may include the following:

- Establish and execute competitive annual grant programs: draft and final RFP and award criteria; schedule for grant subaward programs (INSR and SWG will be coordinated and synced to the maximum extent possible); lists of technical review and decision advisory committees; and slate of subawardees recipients (lists will be in easy to use/read formatted spreadsheets with grant numbers and program name and dates on all tabs and headers). Use of online tools (i.e., tools for sub-award applicants to apply; for review teams to read and rank sub-award applicants);

- Administer annual competitive and fair application process: Issue RFP(s); advertise RFP availability; provide support to applicants through availability, webinars, and other tools; conduct proposal review and make grant selections. The INSR and SWG programs will be coordinated and synced to the maximum extent possible).
- Administer subawards: execute grant agreements and disperse funding.
- Monitor Progress and Assess Performance: measure and track grantee performance through a combination of routine and periodic efforts of on-site visits, remote interaction, and electronic reminders so that each subaward recipient is in contact multiple times over the life of the grant. Communicate results to environmental results to EPA, and the appropriate jurisdiction: numbers of acres and/or miles of restoration and conservation practices implemented; and number of restoration, watershed, and/or land use plans designed, developed, or implemented. Implement recommendations/options of the most recent third-party program review reports.
- Technical assistance: provide technical assistance to potential applicants and successful grantees in the form of one-on-one assistance in the field (can be done through third party); through a technical assistance pool of contractor support to eligible recipients; and through development of sub-watershed and/or regional capacity and mobilized partnerships.
- Communications: build public knowledge and support for the grants programs by actively promoting prior successes and future goals through targeted outreach in both traditional media and paid social media promotion in the communities that will have the greatest impact; provide documentation to support efforts. Develop and publish an annual report. The communications efforts must have an ongoing and full-time presence with both the subawardees, and at the program level to continually strategically message to targeted audiences about the programs.
- Networking and information sharing: conduct roundtables for stormwater, agricultural and other crosscutting subjects; conduct webinars to highlight projects and emphasize peer-to-peer connections; support social networking through management of the established Chesapeake Network; support watershed-wide and regional conferences; and support grantee development and distribution of project fact sheets. All the items suggested here are toward the end output for how to share the successful outcomes, lessons learned, technologies developed, approaches gleaned, and best practices employed from the activities' projects.

Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs, as specified in Section VI.C., Reporting, of this announcement.

3. Outcomes

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

Examples of potential outcomes under activities 1 and 2 of this announcement may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and/or sediment (in pounds) reduced or prevented;
- Reduction in volume and pollutant load of runoff;
- Improvements made to state, county, or local environmental programs, requirements, or policies that better protect public health and the environment, and
- Improved collective knowledge about how the Bay is cleaned up, resulting in reduction in the amount of nutrients in the Chesapeake Bay and an improvement in the living resources of the Bay.

In addition to the list of outcomes above, examples of potential outcomes under Activity 2 of this announcement may include the following:

- Number of new sub-watershed wide and/or regional coalitions, partnerships or efforts resulting from investments under this grant award;
- Stormwater runoff reduction of peak flows, total volume, and flow duration, based on before- and after-project measurements;
- Recovery of healthy aquatic life in nearby surface waters based on before- and after-project measurements; and
- Cost savings resulting from project implementation.

D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

The cooperative agreement issued for Activity 1 of this announcement is authorized under the Clean Water Act, sections 117(g)(2) and 117(d). Section 117(g)(2) authorizes the establishment of the SWG program to implement cooperative tributary basin strategies that address water quality and living resource needs and to implement locally based protection and restoration programs and projects.

The cooperative agreement issued for Activity 2 of this announcement is authorized under the Clean Water Act, Section 117(d). Under Section 117(d) (1) of the Clean Water Act, EPA has the authority to issue grants and cooperative agreements for the purposes of protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Both activities are subject to the Office of Management and Budget' (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 CFR Part 1500).

II: AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

The U.S. EPA plans to award one cooperative agreement for each activity under this RFP. Funding for each activity is approximately \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 annually for FY2018 through FY2023, depending on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year(s), as funds may be limited based on these applicable considerations. The total estimated funding for each activity for six years is approximately \$30,000,000 to \$60,000,000.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no award under this announcement.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selection is made. Any additional selection for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decision.

B. Award Type

Successful applicants will be issued a cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance;

collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

For this project, federal involvement would typically be in the form of participation with other CBP partners and stakeholders in an advisory capacity to the grantee. This participation is expected to include involvement through the various CBP Goal Implementation Teams and related committees and workgroups (on which EPA also participates to ensure that all the recommendations for technical work support the CBP partners). All work conducted is to support the efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its surrounding watershed.

C. Partial Funding

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a project, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice the applicant or affect the basis upon which the proposal or portion thereof was evaluated and selected for award and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is six years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFP is **June 1, 2018**.

E. Pre-Award Costs

Recipients may incur otherwise eligible and allowable pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award at their own risk without prior approval of EPA's award official. Pre-award costs must comply with 2 CFR 200.458 and 2 CFR 1500.8. If EPA determines that the requested pre-award costs comply with the relevant authorities, and that the costs are justified as allocable to the project, then these costs may be included as allowable expenditures at the time that the assistance award document is prepared.

However, if for any reason EPA does not fund the proposal or the amount of the award is less than the applicant anticipated, then EPA is under no obligation to reimburse the applicant for these costs incurred. Thus, applicants incur pre-award costs at their own risk. Costs incurred more than 90 days prior to award require the approval of EPA Region 3's grant official.

III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP. For-profit organizations are not eligible.

B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

Activity 1:

Pursuant to Clean Water Act 117(g)(2), Small Watershed Grants are subject to a minimum 25 percent cost-share. Therefore, for Activity 1, an applicant must provide a minimum of 25 percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

Activity 2:

Pursuant to Clean Water Act 117(d)(1), the agency shall determine the cost share requirements for awards. The CFDA Number 66.466 states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost

share ranging from five to 50 percent of eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For Activity 2, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of 50 percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

Cost-share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Involvement from foundations, watershed groups, private sector, eligible governmental, as well as non-conventional partners can help with the match. This match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to the match provisions in grant regulations. Proposals that do not demonstrate how the 25-percent match for Activity 1 or the 50-percent match for Activity 2 will be met will be rejected.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Only proposals from eligible entities (see Section III.A above) that meet the following threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the criteria in Section V.B. Applicants must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified in writing within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

- 1. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the narrative proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.**
2. In addition, initial proposals must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed as explained in Section IV) on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their proposal/application is timely submitted.
3. *Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues.* An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with James Hargett at Hargett.james@epa.gov (see Section VII, Agency Contact) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
4. For a proposal to be considered eligible for funding, substantive project-related work included in the proposal must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia.
5. Proposals must show how they will meet the 25-percent and 50-percent cost-share requirements of Section III.B.
6. Proposals requesting more than the maximum funding amount listed in the range for the applicable (or relevant) activity will be rejected.

7. Applicants may apply for either or both activities. Applicants must submit a separate application for each activity if they apply for both. Applicants cannot submit more than one application per activity.
8. If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain a Proposal Package

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from Grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Proposal Submission

Each proposal will be evaluated using the criteria referenced in Section V.B. of this announcement. Applicants must submit a single-spaced narrative proposal of up to 10 pages in length by the date and time specified in Section IV.C below. The format for this proposal is contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the proposal. Proposals that are not prepared in substantial compliance with the requirements in Appendix A will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

The proposal package **must** include the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.
2. **SF-424A, Budget Information** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown in Section A on Line 5(e) and on Line 6(k) of Column (1) of Section B while recipient's total cost-share should be shown in Section A on Line 5(f) and Line 6(k) of Column (2) of Section B. The amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
3. **Narrative Proposal** – The format for this proposal is contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the proposal.
4. **Budget detail** – The detail should include spreadsheet that shows each year's cost for the salaries, fringe benefits, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual expenses, other, and indirect cost. **See format in Appendix A.**

Requirements for Narrative Proposal — See Appendix A

All proposal review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the proposal. The proposal shall not exceed 10 pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10, and the proposal must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper. Note that the 10 pages include all supporting materials such as resumes or *curriculum vitae* and letters of support. Documentation for the

budget detail, non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, and the SF-424 and SF-424A forms are not covered by the page limit.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. This program is eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372, An Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. See this link for information and instructions: <https://wcms.epa.gov/grants/epa-region-3-grants-and-audit-management-branch-intergovernmental-review-process-and-single>. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority

Grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirements for “Administrative Costs” under the Clean Water Act, Section 117 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award (annual grant award = federal share plus cost-share).

Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet is provided as an example of a method to calculate the 10-percent limitation. You are not required to submit Appendix B with your proposal.

Allowable Costs

EPA assistance agreement funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Federal funds may not be used for cost sharing for other federal grants (except where authorized by statute), lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to the provisions of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E, Cost Principles. During the grant negotiation, any ineligible costs outlined in the proposal (i.e. lobbying activities) will be excluded in the final grant award.

E. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

Postal Service Mailing Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand

Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Rm # 51278
Washington, DC 20004

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Organization Name and DUNS
- Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
- Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through Grants.gov.

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request -- all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding proposal content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2016, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2016). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2016 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2017, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2017.

Please note that the process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

F. Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then go to the "Get Registered" link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration

with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. 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 submission deadline. Registration on Grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose DUNS number is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS number listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then "Apply for Grants" from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through Grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit Adobe Reader Compatibility Information on Grants.gov.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to Grants.gov and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3-CBP-18-01 or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.466), in the appropriate field and click the Search button

Please Note: Applications submitted through Grants.gov beginning January 1, 2018 must be submitted through the "Workspace" feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page.

Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than January 15, 2018. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the "Show Instructions" tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

1. **Narrative Proposal** – The format for this proposal is contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the proposal-project narrative attachment form.

2. **Budget detail** – The proposal package should include a spreadsheet that shows each year's cost for the salaries, fringe benefits, total salaries/wages, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual expenses, other, and indirect costs. The budget detail does not count toward the 10-page limit. Use *Other Attachments* form to submit through grants.gov. More information on the budget detail is in Appendix A.

3. **Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

4. **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown in Section A on Line 5(e) and on Line 6.k of Column (1) of Section B while recipient's total cost-share should be shown in Section A on Line 5(f) and Line 6.k of Column (2) of Section B. The amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on Line 22.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

G. Technical Issues with Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726.

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. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced or a revised application needs to be submitted.

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear. **Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.** The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays. A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission. Note: Grants.gov issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to Grants.gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to James Hargett (hargett.james@epa.gov) with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact James Hargett at 410-267-5743. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late

submittal.

- a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants), it is essential to call [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. 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. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants), such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact James Hargett.
- b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to James Hargett prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.
- c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to James Hargett with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants) and attach the entire application in PDF format.

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

H. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and sub-awards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews proposals for threshold eligibility purposes as described in Section III, CBPO will conduct a merit evaluation of each eligible proposal. Reviews will be performed by a team of professionals from EPA and possibly other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of CBP partnership. All reviewers will sign a conflict of interest statement indicating they have no conflict of interest.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

Criteria	Points
1. Organizational Capability, Scope and Approach: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the proposal based on: a. The quality of the proposal and how it demonstrates the ability to timely and successfully perform the relevant activity to support the CBP partners described in Section I.C. (5 points) b. How well the proposal demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience in working with and supporting multiple management agencies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholder collaborative efforts, including	40

<p>underrepresented communities, to provide technical and scientific expertise to enhance environmental protection decision-making. (5 points)</p> <p>c. How well the proposal demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience in (30 points) (Note: Proposals will only be evaluated using the criterion that corresponds with the activity addressed in the proposal):</p> <p>Activity 1 and/or 2: Administering a federally-funded sub-award program (RFP, guidelines, coordination, selection, advertising, assistance) to achieve program objectives through a competitive grant process; presenting workshops as a means of advertising the program; disbursing monies to subawardees in a timely manner to avoid unliquidated obligations; providing hands-on technical assistance; conducting project monitoring to support the implementation and success of <u>all</u> subaward projects; measuring and reporting; transferring information to stakeholders; ensuring project activities meet programmatic objectives; and implement results of third-party SWG/INSR program reviews as well as coordinate the next-scheduled periodic review.</p> <p>Activity 2 note: Proposals for INSR subaward funding must demonstrate, and will also be evaluated based on, the quality and extent to which the projects vastly accelerate implementation on a sub-watershed and/or regional-scale while also addressing the other program aspects. Subawards that are not at the sub-watershed and/or regional-scale may be made by exception only and on an extremely limited basis. Additionally, <u>all</u> subaward projects must quantitatively measure and report nutrient and sediment reductions to EPA and the appropriate jurisdictions.</p>	
<p>2. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the proposal based on the applicant’s programmatic capability to successfully perform the proposed activity taking into account the applicant’s:</p> <p>a. Past performance in successfully completing federally- and non-federally-funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements). Successful completion of federally-funded assistance agreements also includes your organization’s history of meeting reporting requirements and submission of acceptable final technical reports under those agreements (5 points).</p> <p>b. Extent and quality to which applicant adequately documented and/or reported on their progress in achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federal agency assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not (5 points).</p> <p>c. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain experienced and qualified staff, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project (5 points).</p>	<p>15</p>

<p>Note: In evaluating applicants under Items a and b of this criteria, the reviewers will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these sub-factors (a and b); a neutral score is half of the total possible points. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of zero for these criteria.</p>	
<p>3. Cost-effectiveness: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate each proposal based on its degree of cost-effectiveness, considering the following factors: organizational overhead, budget breakdown, and ability to control cost for the relevant activity listed in Section I. (15 points)</p>	15
<p>4. Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the proposal based on the degree to which the proposal includes an adequate plan to (10 points):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gather and share information and lessons learned from the project(s) (3 points). b. Transfer the documentation/information/data/results/recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner (3 points). c. Guarantee the effective communication of the INSR / SWG program’s contributions, achievements, and funding sources in the local communities across the Bay watershed that receive funding under the grant (4 points). 	10
<p>5. Seamless Transition: How well the applicant can become fully functional in the roles described in the Outputs section once a cooperative agreement is awarded, and how the applicant will support the CBP partnership and its management structure. (5 points)</p>	5
<p>6. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the proposal based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (5 points)</p>	5
<p>7. Environmental Results (10 points): Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the environmental outputs and outcomes identified in Section I.C of the RFP.</p>	10

C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible proposals will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in Section V.B. above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and possibly other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked proposals to the director or deputy director of CBPO for final selection. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider programmatic goals and priorities including those described in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement at www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page.

D. Additional Provisions

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be

found at EPA Solicitation Clauses at www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses. These clauses are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VI: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that applicants will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around February 2, 2018 either via email or U.S. Postal Service. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal 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 EPA Region 3 grants office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official 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 grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application package. A federal project officer provides assistance in the application process and negotiates a work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

If your proposal is selected, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. Any information about general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be found at: grants.gov.

Federal Requirements

An applicant whose proposal is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award. EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final cooperative agreement amount and work plan content prior to award consistent with agency policies.

Indirect Costs

If indirect costs are budgeted in the assistance application and the non-profit organization or educational institute does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare and submit an indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with the federal cost principles in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E (Section 200.414), and Appendix III and IV to Part 200, within 90 days from the effective date of the award. Per 2 CFR Section 200.414(f), if your organization has never received a negotiated indirect rate, it may opt to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which may be used indefinitely. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the aforementioned regulations regarding indirect costs.

If a state or local government does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E (Section 200.414), and Appendix VII to Part 200. The state or local government recipient whose cognizant federal agency has been designated by OMB must develop and submit its indirect cost rate proposal to its cognizant agency within six months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year. If the cognizant federal agency has not been identified by OMB, the state or local government

recipient must still develop (and when required, submit) its proposal within that period. Per 2 CFR Section 200.414(f) and Appendix VII to Part 200, Section D.1.b, if the state or local government has never received a negotiated indirect rate and if it receives \$35,000,000 or less in direct Federal funding, it may opt to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which may be used indefinitely. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the aforementioned regulations regarding indirect costs.

Incurred Costs

Funding eligibility ends on the date specified in the award. The time expended and costs incurred in either the development of the proposal or the final assistance application, or in any subsequent discussions or negotiations prior to the award, are neither reimbursable nor recognizable as part of the recipient's cost share.

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

In accordance with 2 CFR Section 1500.11, projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

The QMP must document quality assurance policies and practices that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet program objectives. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-2: EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans (refer to <http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/r2-final.pdf>, Chapter 2). The recipient's QMP should be reviewed and updated annually as needed. The QMP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 45 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation.

The recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Requirements for QAPPs can be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/quality/template-developing-generic-quality-assurance-project-plan-or-plan-elements-model>.

Deliverables

Awarded applicant will be required to provide a chart or list of programmatic and administrative deliverables, and due dates.

C. Reporting

Quarterly or semiannual progress reports, as determined by the federal project officer, will be required as a condition of this award.

D. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grant-competition-dispute-resolution-procedures>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement.

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII: AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFP, please contact James Hargett via email at hargett.james@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via email or fax at 410-267-5777 with the reference line referring to this RFP (Re: RFP EPA-R3-CBP-18-01). All questions and answers will be posted on <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>.

VIII: OTHER INFORMATION

In developing your proposal, you may find the following documents helpful. Websites for guidance documents are listed here. If you prefer a paper copy, please call 1-800-YOUR BAY.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Management Strategies

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page>

Electronic copy of the *CBP Guidance for Data Management*

<http://archive.chesapeakebay.net/cims/Guidance%20for%20Data%20Management%20Nov%202006.pdf>

Electronic copy of the *Chesapeake Bay Program Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance*

<http://www2.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

<http://www2.epa.gov/grants/implementation-quality-assurance-requirements-organizations-receiving-epa-financial>

Please visit the EPA Grants website (<http://www2.epa.gov/grants>), the EPA Region 3 Grants website (<http://www2.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>) or the Chesapeake Bay Program website (<http://www2.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>) if you have questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Further information on CBP committees is located at: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/about/organized>

Appendix A
Narrative Proposal Format + Budget Detail Information
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III
Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2016 Request for Proposals (RFP) for
Chesapeake Bay INSR - SWG
EPA-R3-CBP-18-01

The following information must be provided or the proposal may not be considered complete and may not be evaluated.

- A. Narrative Proposal Format:** Narrative proposals as described below shall not exceed 10 single-spaced pages. The proposal must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 10-page limit includes all supporting materials, resumes or *curriculum vitae*, and letters of support but excludes the budget detail, documentation of non-profit status, and the SF 424 and 424-A forms. Applicants must ensure that the proposal clearly identifies the activity number. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

1. Name, address (street and email), and contact information of the applicant

2. Background - Include the following in this section:

- i) Project title.
- ii) Brief description of your organization.
- iii) Documentation of non-profit status, if applicable.
- iv) Brief biographies of applicant lead(s) including resumes and/or curriculum vitae.
- v) Funding requested. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost-share or in-kind resources.
- vi) DUNS number — See Section VI of RFP.

3. Work plan - Include the following in this section:

- i) A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements of the activity that the proposal addresses as described in Section I of the announcement.
- iii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the proposal will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project.
 - 1. Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Expected outputs from the activities to be funded under this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.
 - 2. Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outcomes under activities 1 and 2 of this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.
- iv) Review Criteria: **Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFP. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative.**

With specific respect to the Programmatic Capability Past Performance factor in V.B:

Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

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

B. Budget Detail - For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a budget detail breakdown by the major budget categories (i.e. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). In each of the budgets, include the cost share amount (a minimum of 25 percent for SWG and 50 percent for INSR of the total project costs) and demonstrate how the cost share will be met, including, if applicable, letters of commitment from any third-party contributors. Please note that subaward costs must be included in the "Other" budget costs category. For an example budget detail, please go to https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-08/documents/ogd_budget_detail_guidance_5_31_11.pdf.

In addition, grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirement for "Administrative Costs" under the Clean Water Act, Section 117 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent administration cost cap in Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet. To calculate the specific cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

3. EPA amount (including any in-kind) ÷ 95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
4. 100% of Total Grant Amount × 5% = Applicant's Cost-Share Amount

**Appendix B
EPA-R3-CBP-18-01**

**SAMPLE
(DO NOT SUBMIT WORKSHEET WITH APPLICATION)**

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST CAP WORKSHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: In accordance with Section 117(d)(4) and 117(e)(6) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the costs of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under Section 117(d) or 117(e) of the CWA shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. The annual grant award is the total costs including Federal and cost share amounts. The worksheet below is provided to assist you in calculating allowable administrative costs. The Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) should reflect how your administrative costs will comply with the cap. For specific guidance refer to page 2 of this sample “Compliance with CWA Section 117 Requirements Restricting Administrative Costs.”

Total Costs	\$ _____
Cap %	X .10
Limit on Administrative Costs	\$ (a) _____
List Administrative Costs: (Budgeted costs for application)	
_____	\$ _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Total	\$ (b) _____

Line (b) cannot exceed Line (a).

COMPLIANCE WITH CWA SECTION 117 RESTRICTING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Statutory Authority

Under statutory authority, grantees applying for Chesapeake Bay Program grants/cooperative agreements under Section 117 (d) or (e) must adhere to the requirement on administrative costs as follows:

Under Section 117(a)(1) Administrative Cost - The term “administrative cost” means the cost of salaries and fringe benefits incurred in administering a grant under this section.

Under Section 117(d)(4) - Administrative Costs. - Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Under Section 117(e)(6) - Administrative Costs. -Administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Guidance for Determining Administrative Costs

As determined by EPA/CBPO, the following provides guidance in determining administrative costs for grants/cooperative agreements under Section 117 (d) and (e) of the Clean Water Act.

1. Administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits charged against the project or program element for the sole purpose of administering the grant/cooperative agreements shall not exceed 10% of the annual grant **award (Federal and cost share)**. One hundred percent of the salaries and fringe benefits related to these functions are considered administrative costs. Examples of administrative costs include, but are not limited to:

- preparation and submission of grant applications
- fiscal tracking of grants funds
- maintaining project files
- collection and submission of deliverables

2. Non-administrative Costs

Salaries and fringe benefits related to the implementation of the project or program element of the grant/cooperative agreement are not considered administrative costs. None of the salaries and fringe benefit costs related to these functions shall be considered administrative costs. Example:

- the salaries and fringe benefits for technical staff to conduct work to accomplish specific Bay Program goals as outlined in the program or project elements are not administrative costs.

3. Calculation of Administrative Costs

In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, use the format above or a similar format to calculate the costs and include in the Budget Detail of your Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).

4. Questions Regarding Administrative Costs

The grantees shall direct questions to the EPA Project Officer who will determine what costs should be included as administrative costs on a case-by-case basis.