FEDERAL AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: 2024 Region 4 Sustainable Materials Management Grants

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 66.808

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-R4-LCRD-2024-11

KEY DATES:

NOFO Issuance Date:	August 22, 2024
Application Deadline:	December 2, 2024, 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time
Anticipated Notification of Selection:	February 28, 2025
Anticipated Award:	July 1, 2025

The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **December 2, 2024, 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time** in order to be considered for funding. Application packages must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov ([https://www.grants.gov or Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)). Applications will be electronically date and time stamped. Reference Section IV.A. of this announcement for full details on the submission process.

SUMMARY: EPA Region 4 is announcing 2024 Region 4 Sustainable Materials Management Grants competition and soliciting applications from eligible applicants that will improve community resilience and sustainability through sustainable materials management (SMM). Applicants must select at least one of the following technical assistance methods: research, investigation, experiments, education, training, studies and/or demonstration of innovative techniques. Applicants' projects must take place within EPA Region 4, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

FUNDING / AWARDS: EPA Region 4 anticipates awarding approximately $250,000 under this announcement. EPA anticipates awarding approximately 2-4 grants, ranging from approximately $50,000 to $125,000, subject to the availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

I.A. Background

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

Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) is a systemic approach to using and reusing materials more productively over their entire lifecycles. By looking at a product's entire life cycle, we can find new opportunities to reduce environmental impacts, conserve resources and reduce costs. SMM grants can support research, investigation, experiments, study, demonstration, education, and training. For more information about EPA's SMM program please visit https://www.epa.gov/smm.

At least one of the two following SMM priorities must be addressed as part of this NOFO:

1. Addressing Municipal Recycling Markets in Region 4

Recycling is an important driver of our country's economy and a way to conserve our resources and protect the environment. Recycling municipal solid waste reduces materials sent to landfills and incinerators; conserves natural resources such as timber, water, and minerals; and decreases wasted energy by reducing the need to extract and process new raw materials. Recycling can apply to multiple types of recyclables, such as, plastics, glass, metal, aluminum, paper, textiles, and food/organics. In 2020 EPA recognized the importance of recycling by establishing the [National Recycling Goal](), which aims to increase the national recycling rate by 50% by the year 2030, and is supported by the [National Recycling Strategy](). A major impediment to achieve this goal is the fragmented nature of markets across municipalities, states, and regions, etc. Fragmented markets impede recycling and increase the cost of recycling throughout the recovered material value chain. **In order to address this challenge, EPA is soliciting projects that will encourage collaboration and coordination across Region 4 geographies, organizations, and/or businesses to enhance recycling systems, making them stronger and more agile to address changing materials markets. By establishing stronger networks of recyclers, organizations, and governments, existing recycling systems and markets can be advanced in Region 4**.

Project examples under this priority include, but are not limited to:
- establishing and maintaining a collaborative network or cooperative in Region 4 to foster improved approaches to the collection, marketing, and distribution of municipal recycling materials and provide feedstock to manufacturers in the U.S.;
- developing methods to improve market information, and/or connection between markets (e.g. hub-and-spoke model, different geographic locations, industries, consumers, and generators, etc.) for recovered municipal recyclable material; and,

- establishing programs that encourage public or private partners to utilize or invest in recycled municipal materials, and ultimately support economic development, create jobs and expand educational outreach around recycled materials markets.

2. Strategies for Preventing Food Loss and Waste in Region 4

Currently 30-40% of all available food in the U.S. goes uneaten. When edible food ends up in a landfill, embedded natural resources along with money, time, and labor spent to get them from farm to plate are wasted; this impacts the environment, our communities, and the economy. Led by EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the federal government is working with communities, organizations, and businesses along with our partners in state, tribal, and local government to reduce food loss and waste by 50% by 2030 as described at U.S. 2030 Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal.

In June 2024, EPA released the National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics, which identifies effective strategies for addressing food loss and waste. EPA is requesting applications for projects that align with the National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics objectives which include:
1. Prevent food loss,
2. Prevent food waste,
3. Increase the recycling rate for all organic waste, and
4. Support policies that incentivize and encourage the prevention of food loss and waste and organics recycling.

Project examples under this priority include, but are not limited to:
- encouraging the development of policies and practices which effectively divert excess food to new markets and/or expands food rescue capacity;
- increasing capacity for food waste composting;
- upgrading and/or facilitating the transition of yard waste composting facilities to composting facilities that also process food scraps;
- establishing and maintaining a collaborative network in Region 4 to foster improved approaches to address food system challenges;
- increasing public awareness of the environmental, social, and economic benefits of reducing wasted food via source reduction and distribution to people, particularly in underserved and under-resourced communities;
- improving data quality, including establishing baseline food waste metrics, assessing progress on current food waste intervention activities, or measuring the potential for increased food rescue efforts.

I.B. Scope of Work

As noted above in Section I.A, this NOFO solicits applications that support the priorities of addressing municipal and/or industrial recycling markets, or strategies for preventing food loss and waste through source reduction and/or food rescue in Region 4. Applications addressing other topic areas will not be reviewed.

I.C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage

The activities to be funded under this announcement support the FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 6: Safeguard and Revitalize Communities and Objective 6.2: Reduce Waste and Prevent Environmental Contamination. Funded projects must align with EPA's priorities for reducing waste, increasing materials recovery and recycling, or promoting sustainable materials management practices.

I.D. Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes and Performance Measures

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7 "*Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,*" EPA requires that all grant applicants and recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature and in how they are measured. **Applicants must discuss environmental outputs and outcomes in the Narrative Criteria Response as described in Section IV.B.**

1. **Outputs:** The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a specified period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Outputs include but are not limited to:

    - Number of individuals, state, and local governments, and/or businesses served by education, outreach, training, technical assistance, and/or tools related to recycling;
    - Number of recommendations made to local governments and others;
    - Number of new practices applied;
    - Actions or recommendations implemented;
    - Pounds or total volume of food recovered or redirected to those in need;
    - Types of skills and abilities achieved by training participants.

    Progress reports and a final report will be a required output, as specified in Section VI.D. of this announcement.

2. **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 or quantitative, and can be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature. Applications must include a description of anticipated project outcomes resulting from the project outputs, even if the outcome to be achieved is beyond the assistance agreement funding period. Include the quantitative target associated with the outcomes identified in the Narrative Criteria Response as described in Section IV.B. Anticipated outcomes include, but are not limited to:

    - reduction in solid waste going to the landfill,
    - conservation of natural resources, energy, improved air and/or water quality,
    - dollars saved through recycling or reuse efforts,
    - jobs created or retained.

I.E. EPA Statutory Authorities

The statutory authority for this action is the [Solid Waste Disposal Act (SWDA), Section 8001(a)](#) [42 U.S.C. Section 6981(a)](#) which authorizes grants and cooperative agreements for research, investigation, experiments, training, demonstrations, public education programs and studies relating to the reduction of the amount of solid waste and unsalvageable waste materials.

I.F. Definition of Environmental Justice

EPA defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no one group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal environmental programs and policies. **Applicants should discuss and provide specific examples of how the proposed project will address environmental justice challenges in their Narrative Criteria Response as described in Section IV.B**.

I.G. Minority Serving Institutions

EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces. At the same time, EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation by including members of communities which may have not previously participated in such dialogues to participate in EPA programs. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including minority serving institutions (MSIs), to apply under this opportunity.

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

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Historically Black Colleges and](#) [Universities](#)

2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at [Tribal College or University](#).

3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at [Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#)

4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions](#); and

5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at [Predominately Black Institutions](#).

II. AWARD INFORMATION

II.A. Number of Expected Awards and Federal Funding Amounts

EPA Region 4 anticipates awarding approximately 2-4 grants ranging from $50,000 to $125,000 each for a total of approximately $250,000 for the competition. Awards may be fully or incrementally funded, and are subject to a number of considerations including, but not limited to, the availability of funds, quality of applications received, Agency priorities and other applicable considerations.

Awards will be issued by EPA Region 4 and managed by the Land, Chemicals and Redevelopment Division (LCRD).

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 selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

II.B. Partial Funding

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

II.C. Cooperative Agreement

EPA intends to award cooperative agreements under this announcement. Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant(s) in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- review of proposed procurement, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and,
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

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.

II.D. Project Period

The estimated start date for projects resulting from this solicitation is June 1, 2025. All project activities must be completed within the negotiated project performance period of no longer than two years.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

III.A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include States, local, Tribal, interstate, and intrastate government agencies and instrumentalities, and non-profit organizations, see information below. formed under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (not 501(c)(4) organizations that lobby). This includes the MSIs described in Section I.I. All projects must take place within Region 4.

Consistent with the definition of Nonprofit organization at 2 CFR § 200.1, the term nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that 2 CFR 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a non-profit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR 200.1 are also eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible. Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status; such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. 1611.

III.B. Cost Share/Matching Requirement

This competition does not require cost sharing or matching funds. Please do not describe matching funds in your Mandatory Forms, including the Narrative Criteria Response and Budget Table, which are described in Section IV.A. and Appendix A.

III.C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications from eligible entities (see Section III.A. above) that meet all of the below criteria (1-7) will be evaluated against the ranking
factors in Section V.A. of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applications must address one of the SMM priorities described in Section I.A.;

2. Applications must be for eligible activities under the statutory authority described in Section I.E.;

3. Applicants must be an eligible entity;

4. Eligible projects must take place within EPA Region 4, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee;

5. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding;

6. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements described in Section IV. of this NOFO or else they will be rejected. Pages in excess of the page limitation (ten pages) for the Narrative Criteria Response will not be reviewed. The budget table and description is separate from the SF424A form. Both are required to be completed and submitted as part of the application. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application; and,

7. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV. of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV. and Appendix B. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV. of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.

    Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV. and Appendix B, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant clearly demonstrates that it was late due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with Grants.gov or SAM.gov. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application 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 submission outside of Grants.gov.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

IV.A. Application Submission through Grants.gov

The applicant's Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must submit a complete application package electronically through Grants.gov as described in this Section. Please register early in Grants.gov and know that your AOR is available to submit the application.

If you do not have the technical ability to apply electronically through Grants.gov due to limited or no Internet access which prevents you from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, an alternate submission exception request may be made – see Appendix B for instructions. If you submit more than one application for the identical project (either in error or to replace a previously submitted application), EPA will only review the most recently submitted application, unless you notify Alyssa Kuhn at kuhn.alyssa@epa.gov and specify which application you want EPA to review.

To submit an application in Grants.gov, applicants must:
- Have an active System for Award Management (SAM) account (https://www.sam.gov/SAM/).
- Be registered in Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov).
- Have an AOR who will submit the application through Grants.gov.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than December 2, 2024, 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all of the application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package accessed using the instructions above.

IV.B. Application Materials

The following Mandatory forms and documents are required to be submitted through Grants.gov as described in this Section:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424),
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A),
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54,
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report, and
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Includes the Cover Page, Narrative Criteria Response, as described below, and Budget Table as described below and Appendix A.

Optional documents will not be accepted, and any submitted in excess of the above list in IV.B will not be evaluated. Please do not submit any of the following as they will not be considered part of the application review process: references/works cited, letters of support, staff CV/resumes, solid waste master plans, engineering reports, or feasibility studies.

Project Narrative Attachment Form

As described above in the Mandatory Documents, applications must include the Project Narrative Attachment Form which includes a Cover Page, Narrative Criteria Response and Budget Table. All documents must be in English. Any pages submitted in excess of the page limit will not be reviewed.

The Cover Page is a maximum of 1 page in length and needs to include the following:

a. **Project Title.** Provide your unique Project Title.
b. **Applicant Name.** Identify the name of the organization submitting the application.
c. **Eligible Entity Type.** Identify your organization's eligibility as described in Section III.A.
d. **Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number.** List the organization's UEI number.
e. **Project Summary.** Briefly describe the project in two to four sentences.
f. **Contact Information.** Include name, title, address, email address, phone number of your organization's key contact. Both a primary and secondary contact may be listed.
g. **Project Location**. Include the target location(s) for the project, i.e. neighborhood, city, region, state.
h. **Total Project Cost.** Specify the total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including leveraging or in-kind resources.
i. **EPA Funding Requested.** Specify the amount requested from the EPA.

The Narrative Criteria Response is a maximum of 10 pages in length and must explicitly describe the applicant's project and specifically address each of the evaluation criteria below and in Section V.A. as well as the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C. The following requirements apply.

• Must be a document using 12-point Calibri or Times New Roman font with margins and standard, 8 ½ x 11 inch, letter-sized pages.
• Must be organized in the order of the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. using the criteria number and title but need not restate the entire text of the criteria.
• Factual information about your project must be provided. Do not include discussions of broad principles that are not specific to the project. Sufficient detail must be provided to allow for an evaluation of the merits of the proposal. Vague descriptions and failure to address each of the evaluation criteria will result in a lower ranking.
• If a criterion does not apply, include a response which explains why it does not apply. Any criterion left unanswered may result in zero points given for that criterion.
• Answer the following criteria:

1. **Project Summary and Priority Support**

   a. Project Description

Provide a clear and detailed description of the project, including a description of how the project will support and improve community health, resilience and/or sustainability.

b. SMM Priorities
Describe how your project will address one of the priorities described in Section I.A.

b. Objectives
Describe the project objectives and your strategy for achieving those objectives.

d. Scope of Work and Strategic Plan Linkage
Provide a clear and detailed explanation of how the project addresses the requirements in Section I.C. (Strategic Plan Linkage).

2. **Project Partners, Outreach and Transferability**

a. Partnerships
Describe your plan to use and leverage the resources and expertise of partners and stakeholders in the project, including a description of their role and how each partner will contribute to the success of the project. If you do not intend to have any partners, explain how it is beneficial to implement your project without partners.

b. Outreach
Explain how the results of the project will be effectively communicated to interested stakeholders.

c. Transferability
Describe how the project might be replicated and transferable to other communities.

d. Letters
Include letter(s) from any partners and/or stakeholders that include a description of their role in the project.

3) **Project Sustainability**

a. Project Alignment with Community Priorities
Provide a clear and detailed description of the extent to which the project supports and/or aligns with a state and/or local mandate, policy, and/or community priority to improve community health, resilience and/or sustainability.

b. Innovative Approaches
Describe how the SMM project encompasses innovative approaches (e.g., not usual, routine, or established practices) that have the capacity to institute real change.

c. Disproportionately Impacted Communities:
Describe how this grant will address or facilitate the identification and reduction of threats to communities that have environmental justice challenges and/or disproportionately share the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and/or commercial operations or policies.

4. **Project Tasks, Budget and Measuring Progress**

   a. Budget Description
   Describe the project tasks and subtasks, and personnel responsible for each project task and subtask.

   b. Cost Estimates
   Provide and describe how cost estimates for each task were developed and, where appropriate, provide costs per unit. Identify in the Narrative Criteria Response, but not the budget table, any costs that the applicant or other partners will fund for each task.

   c. **Budget Table**
   Provide a detailed budget for your project and provide the itemized, eligible costs for personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. A sample budget can be found in Appendix A. of this announcement. The Table can be a separate part of the Project Narrative Form and can be up to 3 pages. **Only include costs to be covered by EPA grant funds in the Budget Table**. Do not include leveraged funds in the SF-424, SF-424A, or in the Budget Table and Description, but you may include leveraged funds in the form of a statement in the Narrative Criteria Response. Please be sure not to refer to your leveraged funds as matching funds. Budget development guidance can be found at https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02.

   d. Outputs and Outcomes
   Identify for each task what outputs and outcomes will be produced for your project as described in Section 1.D. Include quantitative targets. Describe your plan and approach for measuring progress towards achieving those expected project outcomes and outputs.

   e. Anticipated Project Schedule
   Provide a timeline for the tasks and subtasks described above and an estimate of how long it will take to complete each of these. Provide a schedule indicating completion dates of milestones that demonstrate that you can complete the project and project goals within the two-year project period of performance.

   f. Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds
   Provide your approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

4. **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**
List up to 5 funding assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization managed within the last three years. EPA agreements are preferred. Describe:

    a. Past Performance – Project Management
       Provide a clear and detailed description of your past performance and outcomes in successfully completing and managing those agreements.

    b. Past Performance – Reporting
       Provide a clear and detailed description of 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, (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

    c. Organizational Capability
       Provide a clear and detailed description of the organizational experience and capacity to plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project. Include staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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

V.A. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

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's Solicitation Clauses. **These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications 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.B. Evaluation Criteria

Eligible entities whose applications meet the threshold criteria in Section III.C. will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion described in Section IV.B. and below. Applicants must directly and explicitly address these criteria as described in Section IV.B. **The application's response to each criterion will be reviewed and scored points up to the maximum amounts shown in the table below for each criterion, with a total of 105 points possible for all criteria**.

Criterion	Maximum Points per Criterion

1. **Project Summary and Priority Support.** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the narrative clearly and thoroughly describes:
  a. the project, including the extent to which the project will support and improve community health, resilience, and/or sustainability. (**7 points**)
  b. how the project addresses one of the priorities described in Section I.A. (**5 points**)
  c. the project objectives and the strategy for achieving those objectives. (**5 points**)
  d. how the project addresses the requirements in Section I.C. (Strategic Plan Linkage). (**3 points**)
	20

2. **Project Partners, Outreach and Transferability**: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the narrative clearly and thoroughly describes:
  a. a plan to use and leverage the resources and expertise of partners and stakeholders in the project, including how each partner will play a role and contribute to the success of the project. Alternatively, to what extent is it explained how the project will successfully meet the project objectives without partners? (**7 points**)
  b. how the results of the project will be effectively communicated to interested stakeholders. (**5 points**)
  c. how the project might be replicated and transferable to other communities. (**4 points**)
  d. the extent to which any letters from partners and/or stakeholders explain their role and contribution to the project. (**4 points**) **Applicants will receive zero points if letters are not included.**
	20

3. **Project Sustainability.** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the narrative realistically describes:
  a. how the project supports and/or aligns with a state and/or local mandate, policy, and/or community priority to improve community health, resilience and/or sustainability. (**5 points**)
  b. how the SMM project encompasses innovative approaches (e.g., not usual, routine, or established practices) that have the capacity to institute real change. (**15 points**)
  c. how the project will address or facilitate the identification and reduction of threats to communities that have environmental justice challenges and/or disproportionately share the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and/or commercial operations or policies or explain why it does not. (**5 points**)
	25

4. **Project Tasks, Budget and Measuring Progress.** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the narrative clearly and thoroughly: a. describes the project tasks and subtasks, including the personnel responsible for each task and subtask and the cost estimate for each task. (**5 points**) b. describes how the cost estimates for each task were developed and, where appropriate, the costs per unit and any costs and that will be funded by the applicant or other partners for each task. **(3 points)** c. provides a detailed, itemized budget containing eligible costs for personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs that are reasonable and realistic to complete the project. The extent to which the costs correlate with the project tasks. **(7 points)** d. identifies outputs and outcomes for each project task. **Quantitative targets are necessary to receive full points**. The extent to which your plan and approach for measuring progress towards achieving those expected project outcomes and outputs is described. **(5 points)** e. provides a reasonable and realistic schedule with completion dates of milestones and significant tasks that demonstrate that the project goals and objectives will be completed within the two-year project period of performance. **(5 points)** f. includes approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (**5 points**)	**30**
5. **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance.** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they demonstrate their ability to successfully complete and manage the project, including the degree to which the narrative clearly and thoroughly describes: a. successful past performance and outcomes in completing and managing projects. **(4 points)** b. a history of meeting the reporting requirements under previous assistance agreements, including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes, whether acceptable final reports were submitted and if such progress was not being made, whether you adequately reported why not. **(3 points)** c. the organizational experience and capacity to plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project. The extent to which the staff expertise, qualifications, and knowledge, and other resources demonstrates the project goals will be achieved. Alternatively, the extent to which it is described how these staff or resources will be obtained. **(3 points)** **Note:** In evaluating applicants under this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information,	**10**

| please indicate this in the application 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. | |

V.C. Review and Selection Process

All applications received by the deadline for submission will first be reviewed using the threshold eligibility criteria listed in Section III.C. **Applications that do not pass the threshold eligibility review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding**. Applications that do pass threshold are reviewed and scored independently by three reviewers using the evaluation criteria points identified in Section V.A. as the maximum scores. An application that sufficiently and completely responds to all the criteria can score a total of **105 points.** The review panel will develop and submit the list of applications ranked by total scores to the EPA Region 4 Selection Official for the funding decision. The Selection Official will make the funding decision based on the scoring by the review panel and the availability of funds. In addition, the geographic distribution of projects as well as addressing a variety of program priorities may also be considered.

VI. AWARD INFORMATION

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

VI.A. Award Notification

EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by February 28, 2025. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application, or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by July 1, 2025. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

VI.B. Administrative Requirements

Applicants selected for award will work with the EPA Project Officer to amend or add documents necessary for award. Additional documents may include a Budget Table which will be provided by EPA to the selected applicant to complete. Documents will be reviewed by EPA before the grant can be awarded. Based on EPA's review, the selected applicant may need to revise documents.

VI.C. Awards

The official notification of an award will be emailed by the EPA Region 4 grants office to the applicant contact/grant recipient. The email will include the cooperative agreement (as described in Section II.C.) award signed by the EPA Award Official. Only an EPA grants officer is authorized to bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds. Application selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization questions, funding issues or other discoveries found during the award process may affect the ability of the EPA to make an award to an applicant.

Awards will include terms and conditions that will be binding on the grant recipient. Terms and conditions specify what grantees must do to ensure that grant-related and program-related requirements are met. Some of the terms and conditions may be viewed at: Grant Terms and Conditions and others will be included with your Award. A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: Introduction to Regulations, Policies and Guidance for EPA Grants.

VI.D. Reporting Requirement

Progress reports and a Final Technical Report are required of the grant recipients. The progress reports will be submitted to the EPA Project Officer within thirty days after each reporting period, as defined by the EPA. These reports shall cover work status, work progress, difficulties encountered, preliminary data results and a statement of activity anticipated during the subsequent reporting period. A discussion of expenditures along with a comparison of the percentage of the project completed to the project schedule and an explanation of significant discrepancies shall be included in the reports. They shall also include any changes of key personnel concerned with the project. In addition, the progress reports shall include detailed information on the progress towards meeting the outputs, outcomes and measures as described in Section I.D. (Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes and Performance Measures). The grant recipient must submit the Final Technical Report within 120 calendar days of the close of the grant project period.

VI.E. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the Grant Competition 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. below. Note, the Federal Register Notice at this link references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remain unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

Alyssa Kuhn, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, Land, Chemicals & Redevelopment Division: Phone: 404-562-8197 or email: kuhn.alyssa@epa.gov

Appendix A: Budget Table

The following budget table is provided to assist you in completing your budget as an example to follow, though this format is not required. Other formats are also acceptable if total costs per category are included. Ensure that the category totals are consistent with the amounts in your Standard Form 424A. Use whole dollars and feel free to add extra rows in each category as needed.

a. **PERSONNEL (only position title and not names are required)**

POSITION	HOURLY RATE	# HOURS	# YEARS	TOTAL
a. **PERSONNEL TOTAL**				

b. **FRINGE BENEFITS (for personnel hours above)**

BASE	
RATE	X %
b. FRINGE BENEFITS TOTAL	

c. **TRAVEL (describe each trip's purpose, number of travelers, method of travel and location)**

PURPOSE	LOCATION	RATES (mileage, airfare, lodging, per diem, etc)	# TRAVELERS	COST
c. **TRAVEL TOTAL:**				

d. **EQUIPMENT (items costing $5000 or more)**

ITEM	# of ITEMS	COST PER ITEM	TOTAL
d. **EQUIPMENT TOTAL:**			

e. SUPPLIES (Items costing less than $5000)

ITEM	# of ITEMS	COST PER ITEM	TOTAL
e. SUPPLIES TOTAL:			

f. CONTRACTUAL

DESCRIPTION	COST
f. CONTRACTUAL TOTAL	

g. CONSTRUCTION (not applicable to this grant)

h. OTHER (items that don't fit in categories above, such as rental costs, printing, subawards, etc.)

ITEM	COST
h. OTHER TOTAL	

i. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS: (Sum of categories a. through h.)	
j. INDIRECT COSTS: (RATE:)	
k. TOTAL PROPOSED COSTS: (Sum of categories i. and j.)	
FEDERAL FUNDS REQUESTED:	

Appendix B: Grants.gov Instructions and Limited Exception Procedures

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

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

    a. **Submission Instructions**

    1.   SAM.gov (System for Award Management) Registration Instructions

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

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

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

      Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

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

    2.   Grants.gov Registration Instructions

      Once your SAM.gov account is active, you must register in Grants.gov. Grants.gov will electronically receive your organization information, such as e-Business (EBiz) point of contact email address and UEI. Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active Grants.gov registration. Grants.gov registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal

grant before, please review the Grants.gov Applicant Registration instructions. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, the EBiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to members of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an AOR. Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in Grants.gov. Please review the Intro to Grants.gov-Understanding User Roles and Learning Workspace - User Roles and Workspace Actions for details on this important process.

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

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

3.   Application Submission Process

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to Grants.gov and click the red "Apply" button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.

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

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

4.   Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **December 2, 2024, 11:59 PM ET.** Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

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

b. **Technical Issues with Submission**

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

1.   Contact Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
2.   Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.

Send an email with **EPA-R4-LCRD- 2024-01 i**n the subject line to Alyssa Kuhn at kuhn.alyssa@epa.gov **before** the application deadline time and date and you **must** include the following:

    a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
    b. Description of the issue
    c. The entire application package in PDF format.

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

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

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

c. **Application Materials**

Mandatory Documents: The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Cover Letter, Narrative Criteria Response as described in Section IV. and Budget Table as shown in Appendix A.

Optional documents will not be accepted, and any submitted in excess of the above list, Appendix B.1.c, 1-5, will not be evaluated. Please do not submit any of the following as they will not be considered part of the application review process: references/works cited, letters of support, staff CV/resumes, solid waste master plans, engineering reports, or feasibility studies.