

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: “NATIONAL AIR TOXICS COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAM”

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA) - Questions and Answers.

RFA NO: RTP-OAR-PPSG-04-07

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.034

SUMMARY: The following are formal Agency responses to questions/comments regarding the subject solicitation.

- 1. I have not been able to find the form for “Debarment and Suspension Certification”. Please advise on where I can find and download this form.**

The “Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters” (EPA Form 5700-49) is a part of the EPA “Application Kit for Federal Assistance.” The complete grants application package can be downloaded from EPA’s Office of Grants and Debarment website at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm.

- 2. We would like to enroll auto body shop workers from Lawrence in the EPA funded Spray Technique Analysis and Research (STAR®) program that utilizes laser guided spray guns to reduce air emissions. The laser guns and laser touch technology would cost about \$1100 per shop and represents an investment that our shops can not easily afford. Would EPA allow grant funds to be used for such an equipment purchase?**

Yes. The activities you described would be eligible for consideration under this RFA.

- 3. On the “Checklist for Applications Under \$100,000” at EPA’s Office of Grants and Debarment website, can you tell us: (1) how do we determine if we need to complete the Quality Assurance Narrative Statement; and (2) what constitutes a “Federal Demonstration Project ?”**

If the project involves environmentally related measurements or data generation, the applicant must develop and implement Quality Assurance practices. If you are unsure whether a Quality Assurance Plan is required for your project, we encourage you to submit your application without statement. If selected for award, grant recipients will have up to 30 days after award to submit the Quality Assurance Narrative Statement.

EPA's research and demonstration grants process provides grant funding for the academic and other not-for-profit research communities to expand our understanding of pollutants and their effect on the environment. Services are provided mainly by EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD).

- 4. I am considering a focus on motor vehicle (primarily diesel school bus) emissions being taken up by the air intakes of schools and other buildings. I realize that mobile sources are not in the purview of this RFA. However, given that indoor sources are, would you consider this type of proposal?**

Yes. The activities you described would be eligible for consideration under this RFA.

- 5. Does the \$60,000-100,000 funding limit include or exclude indirect costs?**

The actual amount of the awarded grant, ranging in value from \$60,000-\$100,000, shall include all costs.

- 6. Would a community burn pile for 1,000+ folks be considered a stationary source?**

Unfortunately, there is not enough information provided in this question to properly reply. Under this RFA, EPA primarily seeks to fund on-going continuous activities at what would normally be considered stationary sources. Some examples provided in the RFA include automotive paint and body shops, chromium electroplaters, dry cleaners, or printing operations.

- 7. What we have is a community of around 1000 people who use on a daily, weekly, monthly, annual basis a community burn pile to dispose of their green waste/yard waste items. The site is used almost every day. The site has many of the characteristics of the other sites your RFA mentions. Are funds available under this RFA to develop a program to move away from open burning and into composting?**

No. The activities you described would not be eligible for consideration under this RFA.

- 8. Please clarify the length of the narrative workplan. The RFA states that the maximum page length for the narrative is 10, however, on EPA's "Checklist for Applications Under \$100,000," it states that the narrative should not exceed 5 pages in length.**

The maximum length for narrative workplans, submitted under this RFA, is 10 pages.

- 9. Would it be possible for the EPA to issue an extension for the deadline?**

Yes. The closing date and time for submission of applications has been extended to May 24, 2004.

- 10. What is a Biographical Sketch? Is there a format we need to follow in writing this grant, is so I don't see the format.**

The biographical sketch, generally not more than 1-2 paragraphs, is a brief summary of the subject's related background, qualifications, and experience.

Refer to *Section IV.B, Content and Form of Application Submission*, for information on application format.

11. Is there a way to learn about these type of announcements well in advance of their due date? We generally need about 45 days to be able to put a good proposal together.

Current competitive funding opportunities for the Office of Air and Radiation are posted at the OAR Grants/Funding (http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html) and, FedGrants (<http://fedgrants.gov>) websites, generally, 60 days prior to the closing date for submission of applications/proposals.

12. What are the procedures for determining an indirect cost rate for our grant budget?

We do not currently have an approved indirect cost rate from the EPA or any other federal agency. However, in 2002 the EPA did allow us to file a “cost plan” which resulted in us being able to use a 25% indirect cost rate on a \$100,000 grant. We have grown since then and are now using an indirect rate of 17.5%. How do we apply to use a 17.5% indirect cost rate on the submission of a new grant?

You may submit a written request, along with your application, for consideration of the *provisional* indirect cost rate of 17.5%. If selected, as a grant recipient, you will be required to file supporting documentation for final Agency approval of the provisional rate within 30 days from the date of award.

13. Which regions can apply for these grant funds? Are grant funds from this RFA available to Puerto Rico?

Proposals will be accepted from state, local, multi-state, and tribal governmental agencies, universities, and non-profit organizations, as defined by [OMB Circular A-122](#). (Refer to Section III(A), *Eligible Entities*.)

14. Is the deadline for submission of applications still May 17, 2004?

No. The closing date and time for submission of applications has been extended to May 24, 2004.

15. Are contamination sites considered stationary sources? We are trying to determine the source of air toxics in outdoor air as well as. Candidate sources include possible commercial users of toxic solvents, remedial treatment systems, vapor intrusion from contaminated soil and groundwater, and local landfills. Would a community-based project that investigates such sources, as well as the fate and transport of such contaminants, be within the scope of this program? We envision a project that builds on existing Superfund and RCRA investigations, but which addresses issues that they cannot address effectively.

Unfortunately, your second statement was incomplete. However, for the purposes of this solicitation, a site that has been contaminated by RCRA or Superfund activities would not be considered as a stationary source. Alternatively, working with a currently operating commercial user of solvents, or with a landfill to reduce toxic emissions, would be considered activities with stationary sources.

16. The Request for Applications indicates that projects can either involve stationary sources or indoor air sources. The examples in the Scope of Work section support the view that a project could involve either category. However, the “Project Objectives/Implementation Plan” evaluation criterion awards points based on the ability of a project to “integrate activities across stationary, mobile and indoor air sources.” I’m confused on this point.

EPA would like to fund projects which involve either stationary sources or indoor air sources within community projects that are well integrated across all activities such as stationary, mobile and indoor air sources. To illustrate, one example of an integrated approach to reducing air toxics might involve a community currently doing work which involves mobile sources that also wants to include work, under this announcement, on stationary and indoor air sources.

17. We wish to develop a PowerPoint and/or video tape presentation showing problems occurring because of toxic emissions from printers, dry cleaners and auto body and paint shops. The presentation would be used for community civic groups and available for school presentation. Additionally, we would like to do a direct mail campaign to the affected businesses. The mailing would contain a form to be filled out that would enter them in a competition for the business finding the best way to minimize their emissions. The winner would receive a monetary award, recognition by the County Council and, on the County website. Would this type of project fall under the RFA?

Yes. The activities you described would be eligible for consideration under this RFA

18. Mothers for Clean Air is partnering with the City of Houston and the University of Texas School of Public Health to prepare a proposal. We have been selected to receive an EPA Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving grant. Will that negatively affect our chances of receiving an air toxics community-based grant? Would a proposal from the University of Texas School of Public Health be more favorably received?

No. Your selection as a recipient of other EPA grants will not have a negative affect on your chances of receiving an air toxics community-based grant. Proposals from eligible entities which are best able to directly and explicitly address the *Section V, Selection Criteria* will be considered, and have a greater likelihood of being selected for award.

19. Under the Section V(A) evaluation criterion “Project Objectives/Implementation Plan,” number 3 asks about integrating activities across stationary, mobile and indoor air sources. However, under Section I(B), Scope of Work the announcement states that applications for mobile source activities are ineligible and will not be considered. Is there a mistake in number 3, or are we also expected to address mobile sources in this proposal?

Although we are looking for communities which are working towards better integration of activities across stationary, mobile and indoor air sources, under this announcement, EPA will only fund proposals which address stationary and indoor air sources. Applicants are not

expected to address mobile sources in their proposals. For application purposes, please leave this area blank

20. Where are the answers to questions posted at the OAR Grants/Funding webpage? I could not find them at the URL listed.

A link labeled “Questions and Answers” will appear directly beneath the synopsis of this RFA at the OAR Grants/Funding webpage (http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html). Answers to questions will be posted, weekly, until the closing date of this announcement.

21. In reading the RFA, I am unable to determine whether stationary sources include large commercial truck marshaling/inspection plazas. Approximately 1.5+ million commercial vehicles idle (sometimes for hours) and are processed at one of our international bridge plazas in Buffalo, NY. The residential neighborhoods surrounding this compound have been determined to have asthma/respiratory illness rates that are nearly 3 times the national average.

Would a study examining external air quality vis-a-vis internal air be eligible under this request? If not, can you suggest alternatives for studying this semi-stationary source and respiratory illness in adjacent residential areas?

A proposal studying the effects of external air on internal air would be regarded as an indoor air issue and would be eligible for consideration under this RFA. Reducing vehicle idling is a mobile source issue and would not be eligible for consideration under this RFA.

22. Is the biographical sketch referenced in *Section IV(B), Content and Form of Application* for the agency/entity applying, the project officer, the person actually doing the project work activities, or someone else entirely? Under the narrative there is a requirement to state “Qualifications.” I’m not sure how that differs from the biographical sketch.

The biographical sketch, generally not more than 1 - 2 paragraph, should be provided for the Project Manager and any other key personnel proposed. Key personnel are defined as any individual(s) dedicating 50% or more of their time to the proposed project.

The qualifications portion of the narrative statement should provide a more detailed summary of technical experience and knowledge, and project management experience for both your organization, and key personnel. Additionally, you will need to demonstrate how those qualifications meet the evaluation criteria listed in Section V(A) of the RFA.

23. Can funding be used for a program to encourage use of electric lawnmowers? Such programs typically involve either exchange of an old gas powered mower for a new electric mower, and/or rebates for purchase of electric mowers.

Because gas powered mowers are considered mobile sources, the activities you described would not be eligible for consideration under this RFA.

24. One of our agencies is interested in using the available air toxics grant money for a project to remove mercury switches from vehicles at scrap yards prior to shredding the vehicles. There is a potential for air emissions of mercury from auto shredders if mercury switches are left in vehicles and also a potential for air emission of mercury when shredded metal from such vehicles is sent to be used as raw material in electric arc furnaces. Would a program to remove the mercury switches from vehicles qualify for funding?

Although vehicles are involved, the activities you described would be eligible for consideration under this RFA. Under the proposed scenario, the primary concern is the air emissions of mercury when the cars are used as raw materials in the electric arc furnaces which are considered a stationary source.

25. We will be subcontracting with a University that has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement of 50% with EPA. Is that acceptable for this proposal?

Yes. A copy of the organization's approved indirect cost rate should be included in the final application.

26. The item "Quality Assurance Narrative Statement, if applicable" in Section IV(B)(1)(i) of the RFA is footnoted, but there is no reference. How do I find out if it is applicable to our project?

If the project involves environmentally related measurements or data generation, the applicant must develop and implement Quality Assurance practices. If you are unsure whether a Quality Assurance Plan is required for your project, we encourage you to submit your application without statement. If selected for award, grant recipients will have up to 30 days after award to submit the Quality Assurance Narrative Statement.

27. Does the 10-page limit apply to just the Narrative Workplan or to the entire Narrative Statement (which includes such things as budget, qualifications, etc)?

The maximum page limitation is applicable to the narrative statement which includes the narrative workplan and all other requirements listed under Section IV(B)(2) of the RFA.

28. In the guidance document it states that the narrative piece limit is 10 pages. Does that include letters of support or commitment? It appears to say that the CV does not count but third party submissions do.

The maximum page length shall include any pieces that may be submitted by a third party (e.g., references or letters confirming commitments). Resumes or CVs may be attached at the end of the narrative and are not included in 10 page limit. *(Refer to Section IV(B)(2)(f).)*

29. The project we are proposing ties in with our series of "Town Hall Meetings on Lead" being performed under a grant with HUD. We want to include a report done for HUD on the first of these meetings which was held last week in Richmond, to help describe

what we are proposing. Can this 4-page report be included as “Other supporting documentation” or does it need to be part of the Narrative Workplan (and therefore counted in the page limitation).

If the report is submitted to support your proposal, it will be included in the maximum page limitation.

30. Are grant funds under this RFA available for operating an existing air toxics sampling network?

No. The activities you described would not be eligible for consideration under this RFA. Funds available under this RFA may not be used to fund activities related to air toxics monitoring, either actual monitoring, procurement of equipment, or reporting results in any way.

31. The narrative must also be in 12 font, but what about the margins? Are one inch margins acceptable?

Yes.

32. Is the \$60,000-\$100,000 award amount, per year, for 1-3 years? Or, is that dollar amount applicable to a one to three year period?

Cooperative agreements under this RFA will be fully-funded at the time of award. The actual award amount, ranging in value from \$60,000-\$100,000, will fund the complete negotiated project performance period of 12 to 36 months.

33. Would be possible for us to submit our grant application electronically?

No. Electronic submission of proposals is not permitted under this RFA.

34. Are there examples of previous grants that would be available to our Air Quality Officer to review for help with the writing this grant?

No.

35. What is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number for this RFA?

The CFDA number for this funding opportunity is 66.034.

36. Who should I contact for the “State Application Identifier Number?” The instructions say “State use only (if applicable).” How do I find out if it is applicable for this grant?

The “State Application Identifier Number” is assigned by the State, if the application is subject to State review pursuant to Executive Order 12372. *(Refer to Section IV(B)(b) for additional information on the State Point of Contact.)*

37. Where can I find the “Copy of Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement?” Is it required?

The indirect cost rate is negotiated with the cognizant federal agency. If you have not negotiated an indirect cost rate with a cognizant federal agency, you may submit a written request, along with your application, for consideration of a *provisional* indirect cost rate. If selected, as a grant recipient, you will be required to file supporting documentation for final Agency approval of the provisional rate within 30 days from the date of award.

38. Is there a format for the “Reporting Requirements” listed under Section IV(B)(2)(i), or is this something that is completed after the award announcement?

The format and schedule of delivery for quarterly reports will be established as part of the award process.

39. Can I propose monitoring of PM 2.5 in the ambient air?

No. The activities you described would not be eligible for consideration under this RFA. Funds available under this RFA may not be used to fund activities related to air toxics monitoring, either actual monitoring, procurement of equipment, or reporting results in any way.

40. Can I request observing instrument in the proposal?

Unfortunately, there is not enough information provided in this question to properly reply.

41. Can the local government be involved in the observation?

Unfortunately, there is not enough information provided in this question to properly reply.

42. Can other institutions of higher education be involved with me?

Yes.

43. Can EPA’s techniques be used to calculate different toxins in the air from knowledge of emission sources?

Yes.

44. Can I include calculation of risks?

Yes.

45. Are grant funds under this RFA available for holding public lectures for public awareness?

Yes.

46. Are grant funds under this RFA available for setting up a website at our university for the public to know the hourly averages of PM2.5 toxics in the air for different spots in the community?

No. The activities you described would not be eligible for consideration under this RFA. Funds available under this RFA may not be used to fund activities related to air toxics monitoring, either actual monitoring, procurement of equipment, or reporting results in any way.

47. Will the city/local government qualify for a share of the funds available under the RFA, if the project is approved for funding?

Yes, if the city/local government is included as part of the grant application.

48. What is the duration of the project?

All the projects must be completed within the negotiated project performance period of 12 to 36 months.

49. What is the starting date for cooperative agreements awarded under this RFA?

For planning purposes, EPA anticipates completion of the award process will occur not later than September 30, 2004.

50. What is the maximum award amount I may request under this RFA?

The maximum possible award amount for a cooperative agreement awarded under this RFA is \$100,000.

51. Do I need to set up a supervisory board to oversee the progress?

No.

52. Do I need to attach letters of support from the city/local government with the proposal?

No. Applicants may *elect* to attach letters of support to their proposals, however, they are not required.

53. Do we need an "Applicant Identifier?" If so, how do we get one?

No. For application purposes, you may leave this area blank. Alternatively, this area of the SF-424 may be used to include any identifier (i.e., internal control or Dun & Bradstreet numbers) the applicant uses to reference its submission.

54. How do we get an EPA Project Control Number, and is it the same thing as the Project Number?

The EPA Project Control Number refers to the Grant Number assigned, by EPA, to the resultant grant or cooperative agreement. For application purposes, please leave this area blank.

55. In section IV.B. Content and form of Application it states that the narrative is a maximum of 10 pages in length. Later in the same section it states “ the maximum page length shall include any pieces that may be submitted by a third party...” Am I interpreting this correctly? If we include 3 letters of support, we must count them in our maximum length of 10 pages for the narrative? In other words, we would have seven pages left for the narrative?

Yes. The maximum page length shall include any pieces that may be submitted by a third party (e.g., references or letters confirming commitments). Resumes or CVs may be attached at the end of the narrative and are not included in 10 page limit.

56. I note in the application that all applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet number. On which form should this number be included? Should it just be in the cover letter?

If you are using an older version of the SF-424, the Dunn & Bradstreet number may be placed anywhere on the application provided it is identified as such. (See Question #53.) The most current version of the SF-424 has a space provide for inclusion of the Dunn & Bradstreet number.

57. I am very interested in speaking with you about RFA No. RTP-OAR-PPSG-04-07. I have outlined our proposal and am hoping to get your first impressions before we submit a proposal.

Discussions regarding the specific content of your proposal, prior to the closing date and time for submission of all proposals, is not permitted.