

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: “ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONAL STUDENT INTERN PROGRAM”

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA) – Initial Announcement

RFA NO: LV-OAR-RIEL-04-13

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.607

DATES: The closing date and time for receipt of Applications is November 19, 2004, 4:00 p.m. PDT. Applications submitted via U.S. mail must be received in the Program Office by the closing date and time.

To allow for efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests eligible organizations submit an informal notice of “Intent to Apply” by October 4, 2004. Submission of an Intent to Apply is optional; it is a process management tool that will allow EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted proposals.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits proposals from eligible entities to develop and administer an “Environmental Professional Student Intern Program” designed to provide on-the-job training and practical experience for undergraduate and/or graduate students interested in careers in the environmental sciences.

The objective of the program is to increase the number and diversity of students seeking careers as future environmental professionals. To accomplish this, the program will provide opportunities for student interns to participate in developmental activities and unique training assignments at EPA’s Radiation & Indoor Environments National Laboratory (R&IE) in Las Vegas, NV.

FUNDING/AWARDS: The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is \$700,000. In FY 2005, total funding shall not exceed \$135,000. EPA anticipates award of one cooperative agreement, whose annual value shall not exceed \$135,000, resulting from this competitive opportunity. The cooperative agreement will be funded incrementally. Additional funds may be added in each subsequent year of the agreement.

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background.

The “Environmental Professional Student Intern Training Program” is designed to provide undergraduate and graduate students from accredited universities and colleges with opportunities for environmental training experiences at an EPA laboratory in which the student receives a meaningful learning experience. The overall objective of this training program is to provide opportunities to students interested in pursuing environmental careers. This cooperative training program will be administered by a single recipient in response to R&IE-approved and funded internship opportunities.

B. Scope of Work.

EPA’s Radiation and Indoor Environments National Laboratory (R&IE), in Las Vegas, NV is seeking proposals from eligible entities to conduct an Environmental Professional Student Intern Program which will provide on-the-job training and experience for undergraduate and/or graduate students who are interested in careers in the environmental sciences.

In cooperation with R&IE, the recipient will select and employ students to work on individual training projects in response to R&IE-established internship opportunities. Interns selected for training projects at R&IE are employed by the recipient and are not employees of EPA. Selected interns must be undergraduate or graduate students studying at the recipient organization. In accordance with EPA 40 [CFR](#) Part 45.135(a), interns must be “citizens of the United States, its territories, or possessions, or lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence.”

EPA will identify internship training opportunities at the R&IE Lab, providing space, necessary supplies, technical guidance and training to the intern.

Development and administration of the “Environmental Professional Student Intern Training Program” will be based upon the following program design requirements and general guidelines:

1. **Program Design Requirements.** *(Refer to Section IV(B)(2)(c)(1), Content and Form of Application Submission.)*
 - a. U.S. Citizenship. EPA’s training grant regulations cited in 40 CFR 45.135(a) require grant funded trainees to be citizens of the U.S. or of its territories or possessions, or must be lawfully admitted to the U.S. for permanent residence. Applicants must specify the percentage of their student population that meets this requirement.
 - b. Stipends. The recipient must have the ability to process student stipends.
 - c. Reporting/Recordkeeping. The recipient must have the ability to maintain records of students according to major, project identification, dates of internship, and any other pertinent information that would be used in final reports.

- d. Student Application Processing and Evaluation. The recipient must have a system to process and evaluate student applications. At a minimum, the application process must be able to evaluate potential interns on the basis of their computer skills, academic record, and previous work experience.
- e. Eligibility Requirements for EPA Internships - Students must be enrolled in the recipient's organization or have been accepted into graduate school at the recipient's organization. Students must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher to meet eligibility requirements at EPA.
- f. Internship Management - The recipient should describe their recruitment priorities, internship management and expectations in terms of interaction with EPA.
- g. Program Effectiveness - The applicant should discuss how they plan to evaluate, on a yearly basis, the success of the internship.

2. General Guidelines.

- a. EPA anticipates the "Environmental Professional Student Intern Training Program" will begin on or about January 1, 2005 and extend for one year. The program may be renewed for up to four additional years.
- b. The number of internships available will be dependent upon opportunities and funding identified by R&IE. EPA anticipates that internship opportunities will occur throughout the year, depending upon the lab's programmatic decisions. As a result, a fixed schedule or timetable for the announcement of internships has not been established.
- c. Expenses for relocation, travel or housing of an intern are not allowable under the terms and conditions of the proposed cooperative agreement. (Refer to Item #8 of this section.)
- d. Assignments will be sufficiently structured in scope to allow the student to complete a project in a three to nine month period working full-time during the summer and/or part-time during the school year. Extensions of up to 3 additional months may be requested to complete a project.
- e. The laboratory has several areas in which student interns would benefit by practical, on-the-job training experiences including, but not limited to:
 - Environmental Science
 - Physical Science
 - Health Physics
 - Engineering
 - Computer Science
 - Public Relations/Communications
- f. There are no specific curriculum requirements for intern selection, however, preferred study areas include environmental science, earth science, environmental engineering, chemistry, health physics, biology, computer science, communications and public relations.
- g. In cooperation with R&IE, the recipient will develop an initial orientation program that will educate the student in their role, responsibilities, and limitations as an intern.
- h. All internship projects shall be designed to provide valuable learning experiences to the

interns as they prepare for future employment opportunities in the public and private sectors. Internship projects will be carried out under a written training plan developed collaboratively by the recipient and EPA; consultation and technical input will be provided by the EPA Technical Advisor in accordance with the “Statement of Substantial Involvement between EPA and Recipient” detailed below.

- i. Some internship projects may involve student training and/or travel. Funds can be included in the original funding provided to the recipient when an internship is initiated or at a later date by formal amendment to the cooperative agreement.

1. Travel.

R&IE will provide travel and transportation for any intern assigned to a project requiring field work identified in the individual Internship Opportunity and corresponding Training Plan. All travel and transportation expenses required for field work will be paid by the Recipient out of funds included in the cooperative agreement or an amendment to the cooperative agreement.

The intern will be responsible for completing any travel forms the recipient requires prior to traveling and upon completion of travel. The recipient will make travel advances available to the intern, as needed. Recipient travel forms must also be signed by the EPA Technical Advisor and EPA Project Officer to acknowledge the travel is consistent with the intern’s training plan and that the associated funding requirements are available through the cooperative agreement prior to any action by the Recipient. The intern will also provide a travel results report at the conclusion of travel to the Recipient.

2. Training.

R&IE will provide training for any intern assigned to a project where the Technical Advisor feels formal training is appropriate. The need for the training must be requested by the intern or recommended by the EPA Technical Advisor, and approved by the EPA Technical Advisor and EPA Project Officer prior to requesting the recipient to pay for any training expense. Whenever possible, the EPA Technical Advisor will include formal training recommendations and/or requirements in the individual Internship Opportunity and corresponding Training Plan. All training expenses will be paid by the Recipient out of funds included in the cooperative agreement or an amendment to the cooperative agreement.

The intern will be responsible for completing the Recipient’s training approval form(s) prior to registration. When possible, the Recipient will pay for the training rather than requiring the intern to pay and then receive reimbursement. However, when necessary the intern may be asked to pay for the training and then to complete a training reimbursement form upon completion. Recipient training forms must also be signed by the EPA Technical Advisor and EPA Project Officer to acknowledge the training is

consistent with the intern’s training plan and that the associated funding requirements are available through the cooperative agreement prior to any action by the Recipient. The intern will also provide a training results report at the conclusion of training to the Recipient.

Maximum EPA Stipends & Internship Requirements			
Hourly Rate	Weekly/Full-time	Weekly/Part-time	Academic Level/Standing
\$11.00	\$440	\$220	Undergrad - Sophomore
\$11.75	\$470	\$235	Undergrad - Junior
\$12.75	\$510	\$255	Undergrad - Senior
\$15.75	\$630	\$315	Accepted into or attending graduate school
Overtime pay is not allowed.			

To assist applicants in preparing their proposals and associated budgets, R&IE requests the following estimates be used, at a minimum, in determining student intern stipends and training/travel expenses for each year of the cooperative agreement:

Qty	Level	Term	Travel/Training Requirements
1	Sophomore	Part-time - 6 months	(1) local training course
2	Junior	Part-time - 6 months	
1	Senior	Part-time - 6 months	(1) local training course
1	Senior	Full-time - 3 months	1 week travel
1	Graduate	Full-time - 3 months	1 week travel

C. Supplementary Information.

The statutory authority for this action is Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(3) which authorizes the award of grants for research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, and studies related to the causes, effect, extent, prevention and control of air pollution.

II. Award Information

A. What is the amount of funding available?

The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is \$700,000. In FY 2005, total funding shall not exceed \$135,000. Cooperative agreements resulting from this announcement will be funded incrementally. Additional funds may be added in each subsequent year of the agreement.

B. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates award of one cooperative agreement whose annual value shall not exceed \$135,000 resulting from this competitive opportunity; subject to availability of funds.

Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants 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 this project will be:

1. R&IE will provide concise descriptions of available student intern opportunities including information relating to suggested student academic background and prior work experience.
2. R&IE staff will discuss internship opportunities with prospective interns and provide input to the recipient regarding the “fit” between a prospective intern’s academic background and work experience and the available internship opportunity. EPA personnel will not select or make offers to prospective interns.
3. The recipient will consider R&IE’s advice and input on the “fit” between a student’s qualifications and the internship opportunity. The recipient is responsible for selecting the intern, offering the internship opportunity, and arranging an orientation period and start date.
4. The recipient and EPA/R&IE will collaboratively develop the student intern’s training plan. An EPA Technical Advisor will be appointed to provide technical guidance and interact with and monitor the intern’s progress as the student carries out his/her training plan.
5. The EPA Project Officer will have the right to approve the qualifications of the recipient’s Project Manager and key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the recipient).

6. The EPA Project Officer will be part of the final evaluation of interns selected for placement. The recipient will make final decisions on intern placement.
7. The EPA Project Officer will provide oversight and management of this cooperative agreement; provide advice (as necessary) to the EPA Technical Advisor and student interns; and provide liaison to interact with the recipient and EPA/R&IE senior management on the progress of meeting the objectives of this cooperative agreement.
8. The EPA Project Officer will closely monitor the successful applicant's performance.
9. The EPA Project Officer will provide collaboration during the performance of the scope of work.
10. The EPA Project Officer will approve substantive terms of proposed contracts.
11. The EPA Project Officer will review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).
12. The EPA Project Officer will approve quality assurance plans for collecting and assessing data, if warranted.

C. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation is January, 2005 through January, 2010. All projects must be completed within the negotiated project performance period of one to five years.

D. Can funding be used to acquire services or fund partnerships?

Funding may be used to acquire services or fund partnerships, provided the recipient follows procurement and subaward or subgrant procedures contained in 40 [CFR](#) Parts 30 or 31, as applicable. Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by these regulations. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their proposal. Moreover, the fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the proposal EPA approves does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements.

Subgrants or subawards may be used to fund partnerships with non profit organizations and governmental entities. Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products to carry out its cooperative agreement. The nature of

the transaction between the recipient and the subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of [OMB Circular A-133](#), and the definitions of “subaward” at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or “subgrant” at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Entities.

Proposals will be accepted, only, from accredited four year educational institutions (colleges, universities), as defined by [OMB Circular A-122](#).

Non-profit organization, as defined by OMB Circular A-122, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization which: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations. For this purpose, the term "non-profit organization" excludes (i) colleges and universities; (ii) hospitals; (iii) state, local, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; and (iv) those non-profit organizations which are excluded from coverage of this Circular in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Circular.

B. Cost-Sharing or Matching.

Cost sharing or Matching is not required as a condition of eligibility, or otherwise, for proposals selected for award.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. How to Obtain Application Package.

Applicants may download individual grant application forms, or electronically request a paper application package and an accompanying computer CD of information related to applicants/grant recipients roles and responsibilities from EPA’s Grants and Debarment website by visiting: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission.

Applications must contain a narrative proposal, and one completed and signed federal grant application package. The narrative proposal must explicitly describe the applicant’s proposed project and specifically address how it meets each of the evaluation criteria disclosed in *Section V(A), Evaluation Criteria*.

1. A complete application must contain the following, in the sequential order shown:

- a. SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance, with original signature.
 - b. Narrative Statement, in the format detailed below.
 - c. Other supporting documentation.
 - d. SF-424 A, Budget by categories and indirect cost rate.
 - e. SF-424 B, Assurances for non-construction programs.
 - f. Certification Regarding Lobbying and SF LLL, if applicable.
 - g. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance review report.
 - h. Quality Assurance Narrative Statement, if applicable.
 - i. Copy of Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable.
 - j. Biographical Sketch.
 - k. E-mail address or self-addressed envelope (to receive notification of receipt of application).
2. The narrative proposal must conform to the following outline:
- a. Cover Letter. Must describe your organization's qualifications for the project; be signed by an official with the authority to commit your organization to the project; and written on your organization's official letterhead. (2 page maximum)
 - b. Summary Information Page. (1 page maximum)
 1. Project Title.
 2. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
 3. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA.
 - c. Project Description. The project description must provide a concise overview of the Intern Program and how the applicant will implement and conduct its operation and include a Project Work Plan (including a description of all tasks, dates of completion, products and deliverables, and proposed budget). (15 page maximum)

The project description must address how the proposal meets the selection criteria and include:

1. description of how the proposal addresses each of the program requisites detailed in *Section I(B)(1), Program Design Requirements*;
2. proposed method of advertising for and pre-screening candidate interns;
3. proposed method of processing and evaluating student applications;
4. a process plan for management, supervision and training of interns as they carry out their training plans;
5. Proposed benefits offered to interns as employees of the applicant;
6. Past history of the applicant in carrying out similar programs and how carrying out the Intern Program will further the applicant's mission;
7. A conclusion discussing how the applicant will evaluate and measure the success of the project, including anticipated benefits and challenges in implementing the Intern Program.

- d. Detailed Itemized Budget. The proposal must include a detailed budget which clearly explains how funds will be used for the following categories:
 1. Personnel
 2. Fringe Benefits
 3. Contractual Costs
 4. Travel
 5. Equipment
 6. Supplies
 7. Other (including intern stipends)
 8. Total Indirect Costs (must include documentation of accepted indirect rate)
 9. Total CostIf not self-evident, entries under each category should be explained in the budget itself or in the project description. Costs proposed in the budget must be linked directly to the proposal. (5 page maximum)
- e. Key Personnel. The applicant must submit an appendix with the resumes of up to three (3) key personnel who will be significantly involved in the project.

Applicants are strongly advised to avoid submission of extemporaneous materials. Applications must conform to the specific outline and content detailed above. Incomplete applications will not be considered for award. All application materials must be completed in English. The minimum acceptable font size for application materials, excluding the SF-424a, shall be 10 point.

C. Submission Dates and Times.

1. To allow for efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests eligible entities submit an informal notice of "Intent to Apply" by October 4, 2004, to the agency contact identified under *Section VII, Agency Contact*. Submission of an Intent to Apply is optional; it is a process management tool that will allow EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted proposals. Eligible entities not submitting an "Intent to Apply" are still eligible to apply by the closing date and time.

The written notice of "Intent to Apply" may be submitted via electronic mail. Please provide the name of your organization, a point of contact, phone number, email address, and the title of your project.

2. The closing date and time for submission of completed application packages is November 19, 2004, 4:00 p.m. PDT. All application packages must be received in the program office listed below by the closing date and time. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.
3. Because of the unique situation involving U.S. mail screening, EPA highly recommends that applicants use an express mail option to submit their applications. The application should be

addressed to:

Express Delivery Address (FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc.)

Andrea Stafford
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Radiation & Indoor Environments National Lab
4220 S. Maryland Pkwy., Bldg C, Suite 609
Las Vegas, NV 89119

Regular Mail Delivery Address (U.S. Postal Service)

Andrea Stafford
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Radiation & Indoor Environments National Lab
P.O. Box 98517
Las Vegas, NV 89193-8517

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria.

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Proposals that are best able to directly and explicitly address the primary criteria will have a greater likelihood of being selected for award. Each proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

Criterion	Maximum Points Per Criterion
Project Description. Extent to which the proposal effectively addresses each of the Program Design Requirements and General Guidelines of this RFA. Work plan presents a clear and concise description of the proposed intern program, its administration, and its ability to stimulate interest in environmental careers. Budget is clearly stated, detailed and appropriate.	30
Organizational capability. Proposal demonstrates efficient and effective methods of: (1) recruitment– advertising for and pre-screening intern candidates; (2) supervision– supervising interns as they carry out their training plans and, evaluating their performance; (3) Administration– evaluates system for reporting, record keeping, processing applicants and stipends.	25
Experience. Extent to which the proposal demonstrates the applicant’s experience in managing similar training programs; and, how administration of the proposed intern program will further the recipient’s mission.	20

<p>Location. Applicant’s physical location is within a 25-50 mile radius of the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Proximity is a necessity because interns will be required to complete work assignments during the academic year and summer. Ideally, maximum commuting time for the student intern from the recipient’s physical location to R&IE should not exceed 30 minutes.</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>Academic Diversity. Extent to which the applicant offers formal student curriculum in civil, chemical, environmental engineering; natural and physical sciences; environmental sciences; computer sciences; and communications and public relations.</p>	<p>10</p>

B. Other Factors.

EPA reserves the right to make decisions on applications based on factors that help ensure geographic equity and the demonstration of a variety of different technical approaches.

C. Review and Selection Process.

Each proposal will be evaluated by a team chosen to address a full range of issues associated with establishment of an intern program. The Evaluation Team will base its evaluation solely on the selection criteria disclosed in this notice (*Refer to Section V(A), Evaluation Criteria*).

Completed evaluations will be referred to a Selection Committee that is responsible for further consideration and final selection. The highest numerically-ranked proposal (subject to the availability of funds, and consideration of *Section V(B), Other Factors*) will be selected for award.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices.

Following final selections, all applicants will be notified regarding their application’s status.

1. EPA anticipates notification to *successful* applicant(s) will be made via telephone, electronic or postal mail by December 30, 2004. This notification, which advises that the applicant’s proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin performance. The award notice signed by the EPA grants officer is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. At a minimum, this process can take up to 90 days from the date of selection.
2. EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail by December 30, 2004. In either event, the notification will be sent to the original signer of the application.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

1. A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at:
http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm.
2. Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants *selected* for funding may be required to provide a copy of their proposal to their [State Point of Contact](#) (SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Proposal and not all states require such a review.
3. All applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at:
<http://www.dnb.com>.

C. Reporting Requirement.

Biannual progress reports will be required. The biannual progress report should include: a summary of performance progress-to-date, detailed expenditures-to-date, problems encountered, successes achieved, and lessons learned. The schedule for submission of biannual progress reports will be established, by EPA, after award.

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrea Stafford, U.S. EPA, Radiation and Indoor Environments National Laboratory, P.O. Box 98517, Las Vegas, NV 89193-8517. Phone: (702)784-8203; Fax: (702)784-8201, or email stafford.andrea@epa.gov.

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail, facsimile, or electronic mail to the contact person listed above. Answers will be posted, bi-weekly, until the closing date of this announcement at the OAR Grants/Funding webpage (http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html).

VIII. Other Information

Applicants should clearly mark information in their application that they consider confidential. EPA will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no award as a result of

this announcement. The EPA Grant Award Officer is the only official that can bind the Agency to the expenditure of funds for selected projects resulting from this announcement.

Formal disputes challenging the Agency award decision will be resolved using the Dispute Procedures at 40 CFR 30.63 and 40 CFR 31.70.