

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

“Plan, Organize, and Conduct National Air Quality and Smart Growth Workshop”

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

ACTION: Notice of Solicitation # OAR-ITPID-03-06

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funding and solicits proposals from from eligible entities to plan, organize, and conduct a National Air Quality and Smart Growth Workshop.

DATES/DEADLINES: The deadline for submission of Final Proposals is July 17, 2003. Applications submitted via U.S. Mail must be received by the deadline date.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS: All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via regular U.S. mail, facsimile, or electronic mail to one of the persons indicated in the section titled “For Further Information Contact” below. All questions and comments must be received by EPA no later than June 25, 2003. Responses will be posted on EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation Grants/Funding home page (http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html) on July 7, 2003.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The statutory authority for this action is Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(3). The [Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance](#) (CFDA) number is 66.611, Environmental Policy and Innovation Grants. Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs is applicable to awards resulting from this announcement (see section VIII below).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Blanchard (Mail Code C339-03), U.S. EPA Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Information Transfer and Program Integration Division, Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27711. Phone 919-541-5503; Fax (919)541-2664; or email Blanchard.Karen@epa.gov.

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I. Overview and Deadlines

A. Overview

EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Information Transfer and Program Integration Division, is seeking proposals from eligible entities to plan, organize and conduct a National Air Quality and Smart Growth Workshop. The workshop will be a national, multi-disciplinary event that focuses on identifying ways of making Smart Growth and Air Quality Programs work together better.

The workshop should be limited in size, not more than 150 participants, so as to ensure maximum opportunities for discussion, brainstorming and problem solving. The workshop, which may be by invitation only, should solicit a multi-disciplinary audience such as developers, builders, local elected officials, key local government staff, transportation professionals, planners, realtors, public health officials, urban designers, advocates for public interest and environmental justice interests, state and local air quality planning staff, representatives from state governor's offices and academics. The workshop should be a 2 - 2 ½ day event to be convened in the Summer, 2004.

B. Deadlines

The deadline for submitting proposals (an original proposal and four copies, plus one completed and signed Application for Federal Assistance) is July 17, 2003. Refer to *Section VII, Proposals* for detailed instructions on preparing and submitting proposals.

II. Eligible Entities

Proposals for this cooperative agreement will only be accepted from non-profit organizations, as defined by [OMB Circular A-122](#), incorporated or domiciled in the United States; and public (state, county, regional or local) agencies or institutions. Applicants must be located in, and project activities must be conducted within, the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the United States.

III. Background and Scope of Work

A. Background.

EPA's Information Transfer and Program Integration Division (Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards) is examining the connection of air quality management issues with smart growth issues. Smart growth development practices support national environmental goals by protecting sensitive habitats and watersheds, minimizing water quality impacts from development, reducing air emissions, such as by increasing transportation choices and reducing heat island effects, and encouraging cleanup and sustainable redevelopment of Brownfields.

Smart growth/anti-sprawl policies and practices would promote denser, mixed use, more walkable, transit-connected new development where greenfield building is unavoidable, and redevelopment in central cities and older suburbs capitalizing on existing infrastructure and locational advantages. Policies and practices that may indirectly promote sprawl would be those that make it easier and/or less expensive to create single-use, auto-dependent, low density development. A sprawling area is characterized by rapid, low-density growth in areas adjacent to metropolitan centers, high conversion of open space to urban uses and low transit boardings per capita, high numbers of vehicle miles traveled per person, low occupancy per vehicle, heavy roadway congestion, and lengthy commute times and distances.

There is little information in the literature which speaks to the issue of whether Clean Air Act policies and programs are a deterrent to sprawl or whether they contribute to sprawl. In general, what information is available suggests that environmental regulations are far less important in business location decisions than other factors such as cost of land, availability of infrastructure (e.g., power transmission lines, roadways, water and sewer), tax incentives, proximity to major transportation centers, availability of labor, etc. That being said, an important question is whether air regulations and policies are framed or implemented in ways that deter innovative local efforts to prevent sprawl and better manage growth.

Because air programs and policies are framed and implemented largely to address activities which have a direct and primary effect on a single objective – air quality, it is possible, however, that they may impede or deter innovative local, regional or state efforts to manage development in a coordinated or integrated manner that optimizes multiple objectives, including affordable housing, walk-ability, water quality, mixed uses as well as transportation choice and air quality. Thus, it could be useful to identify ways in which EPA and its partners could do more to try to ensure that air regulations and policies and land use policies and programs work together as effectively as possible to encourage the achievement of common goals and multiple objectives.

The workshop that will be developed from this effort will focus attention on what ideas a diverse group of professionals have for making air regulations, policies and programs work in the best way possible to promote clean air and smart growth, and to make it easier for local growth management initiatives to coordinate for multiple objectives.

B. Scope of Work

Activities EPA is particularly interested in seeing addressed in proposals include the following:

1. The establishment of a core planning committee to be responsible for initial planning, including conference timing, location, the general agenda and case studies.
2. The establishment of an advisory committee that will provide feedback on the final agenda, presentation of issues, case studies, and speakers as well as assisting with marketing the workshop if necessary.
3. Identifying candidates for up to four case studies to be presented at the workshop.
4. Conducting site visits for up to four case studies to be presented at the workshop.
5. Preparing up to four case studies to be presented and discussed at the workshop.
6. Conducting all workshop logistics including hotel negotiations, workshop marketing, registration, speaker identification, communication and travel reimbursement assistance, plus providing all logistics oversight during the actual conference.
7. Facilitating discussion at the workshop, and developing and distributing workshop proceedings to attendees.

IV. Funding Issues

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

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation is September 30, 2003 through March 31, 2005.

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

EPA anticipates award of one cooperative agreement resulting from this competition.

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. review and approval of project scope and phases;
2. monitoring, participation, collaboration on various phases of the work;
3. review of all draft and final products;
4. regular e-mail, phone, and conference calls;
5. approving qualifications of key personnel;

EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the recipient.

C. What is the amount of funding available?

The cooperative agreement resulting from this announcement will be funded incrementally. The estimated initial award, in fiscal year 2003, will be \$100,000. Additional funds may be added in each subsequent year of the agreement. The total funding for this project is estimated to be \$200,000.

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

Yes, provided the recipient follows applicable procurement and subgrant procedures. Please note that EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Approval of a funding proposal does not relieve recipients of their obligations to compete service contracts, conduct cost and price analyses, and use subgrants only for financial assistance purposes in accordance with Subpart B Section .210 of [OMB Circular A-133](#). Please indicate any intent to enter into such agreements in the proposal.

V. Selection Criteria

A. Threshold criteria.

In addition to the applicant eligibility requirements and evaluation criteria discussed herein, EPA must assure that a proposal selected for funding meets the following “threshold criteria.” The threshold criteria will be applied on a pass/fail basis. Proposals which fail any one of the threshold criteria will not be considered further. Proposals which meet the threshold criteria, will then be evaluated based on the factors disclosed in paragraph (B) of this section.

1. **Smart Growth/Air Quality Focus.** The proposal must clearly demonstrate an in depth understanding of the smart growth and air quality issues addressed by the project, and the applicant must clearly demonstrate expertise in the connection between air quality and smart growth issues. EPA will use the information described in the background section to apply this criterion.
2. **Substantial Experience in Organizing a Workshop Whose Primary Goal Was Interactive Discussion And Problem Solving.** The applicant must have substantial experience and demonstrated success on organizing workshops, where the attendees were from a multi-disciplinary background, and where facilitation was needed to enhance group discussion on smart growth and/or air quality issues. It is desirable for the applicant to demonstrate experience in coordinating a workshop such as this where consensus is reached on recommendations, and where the applicants have been effective in managing relationships between multiple agencies and organizations, and their ability to attract a multi-disciplinary audience.

3. **Allowable Activities.** The project must consist of activities authorized under the Clean Air Act section 103(b)(3). The activities must advance the state of knowledge or transfer information. This statute authorizes grants for research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies. The term “demonstrations” can encompass the first instance of the pollution control or prevention technique, or an innovative application of a previously used method. The term “research” may include the application of established practices when they contribute to learning about an environmental concept or problem.
4. **Air Pollution Focus.** The project’s general focus must be one that is specified in the Clean Air Act. The project must address the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of air pollution. The overarching focus must be on the statutory purpose of the applicable grant authority.
5. **Serve a Public Purpose.** Projects should be of primary benefit to the applicant organization and the public at large. Proposed projections should clearly and directly support the applicant organization’s overall mission and long-term goals.
6. **Parameters of Event.** The proposal must address a workshop of 2 - 2 ½ days with anticipated attendance of not more than 150 participants. The proposal must include documentation of how participants will be identified and/or, how the applicant has accomplished this for a previous similar event.

B. Evaluation Factors

Each eligible proposal, which meets the threshold criteria in paragraph (A) of this section, will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Proposals which are best able to directly and explicitly address the primary criteria will have a greater likelihood of being selected for award. Proposals will be scored high, medium or low against each of the evaluation factors using a numerical scale of 1 through 5. The factors and their associated weights, in descending order of importance, are as follows:

1. Potential impact of the project and likelihood of success as demonstrated by past success in running a state or national workshop on smart growth and/or air quality issues. (35%)
2. Degree to which the applicant demonstrates expertise and experience in a broad range of smart growth and air quality issues. (35%)
3. Degree to which the proposing organization is an appropriate representative for the wide range of issues to be covered in a national smart growth air quality workshop, and is likely to be viewed as an authority on smart growth and air quality issues. (15%)
4. Degree to which the project approach or findings are replicable, serve as a learning tool, and will be disseminated to appropriate audiences. (15%)

C. Other Factors

EPA will carefully consider applicants past performance administering federal financial assistance and carrying out projects supported by EPA and other federal agencies. Such considerations may include the results of audits conducted by EPA's Office of Inspector General, other federal agencies, or state, local or tribal oversight entities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their performance history in their proposals and to provide contacts for EPA to obtain additional information. In making final selections, factors such as overall excellence, geographic diversity, project diversity, and applicant diversity (i.e., type of organization) may also be considered.

VI. Evaluation and Selection

1. How does the selection process work?

Each proposal will be evaluated by a team chosen to address a full range of Smart Growth and Air Quality programs. The Evaluation Team will base its evaluation solely on the criteria referenced in this notice. Completed evaluations will be referred to a Selection Committee who are responsible for further consideration and final selection.

The Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards expects to complete the Evaluation/Selection process and make recommendations to EPA's grants office by July 27, 2003. All applicants will be notified promptly, after final selections, regarding their application's status.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no award. Formal disputes challenging the Agency award decision, will be resolved using the Dispute Procedures at 40 [CFR](#) Part 30.63 and Part 31.70, Subpart F.

VII. Proposals

Proposals must include a cover letter, summary information page, project description, budget, documentation of qualifications, and one completed and signed federal grant application package. The complete grants application package can be downloaded at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/index.htm>. Project descriptions should not exceed 10 pages (see Item #3, Project Description for additional details). Pages exceeding the maximum length will not be considered. The proposal should conform to the following outline:

1. Cover Letter (does not count against page limit). The cover letter used to submit your proposal must be signed by an official with the authority to commit your organization to the project and should be written on your organizations's official letterhead.
2. Summary Information Page (does not count against page limit). The summary information page should be one-page long and include the following information:
 - the title and number of this request for proposals (Plan, Organize and Conduct A National Air Quality Smart Growth Workshop);
 - applicant name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address;

- name and title of project contact (including how to reach if different from above);
 - summary budget information (amount requested from EPA);
 - 5 to 10 line abstract of proposal Applicant (Organization) and contact name, phone number, fax and e-mail address;
 - Summary of funds requested from EPA
3. Project Description (no longer than 10 page sides). The project description must provide a concise overview of the project and include a preliminary workplan outlining the project's major tasks, products, and timetable. The narrative must also address how the proposal meets the selection criteria. The project description must be no longer than five pages double sided, or 10 pages single sided, must use no smaller than 10 point type and should have page margins all-around of at least one inch.
 4. Budget (does not count against page limit). The proposal must include a detailed budget which clearly explains how funds will be used for the following categories:
 - Personnel
 - Fringe Benefits
 - Contractual Costs
 - Travel
 - Equipment
 - Supplies
 - Other
 If not self-evident, entries under each category should be explained in the budget itself or in the project description.
 5. Documentation of Qualifications (does not count against page limit). Applicants must include short biographies of all principle staff who will have a major role in the project. The biographies must specifically address each individual's experience with smart growth and air quality issues.

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

VIII. Executive Order 12372 Compliance

Applicants selected for funding will be required to provide a copy of their proposal to their [State Point of Contact](#) (SPOC) for review, pursuant with Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required of initial applications and not all states require such a review.

IX. How to Apply

COMPLETED APPLICATION PACKAGES must be received via regular mail or express mail no later than 5 p.m. EST, July 17, 2003. Applications received after the deadline date will not be considered for funding. Please provide an original proposal, as described in *Section VII, Proposals*, four copies of the proposal, and one completed and signed Application for Federal Assistance. Facsimile and e-mail submissions will not be accepted.

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:

1. Mailing Address (USPS mail only):

Gary Blais
Information Transfer and Program Integration Division (C504-02)
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Attn: Karen Blanchard
Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27711

2. Express Delivery (FedEx, UPS, etc.) (Recommended):

Gary Blais
Information Transfer and Program Integration Division
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (C504-02)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
4930 Page Road
Durham, NC 27703

DEADLINE FOR COMPLETED FINAL PROPOSALS
Must be received no later than midnight on
July 17, 2003.