

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

**TITLE:** Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2015 Request for Proposals for Chesapeake Bay Program Committees Support

**ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE:** Request for Proposals (RFP)

**RFP NUMBER:** EPA-R3-CBP-15-07

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER:** 66.466

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

10/22/2015	Issuance of RFP
12/06/2015	Proposal Submission Deadline (see Section IV for more information)
01/29/2016	Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
03/01/2016	Approximate date for applicant to submit federal cooperative agreement application
06/01/2016	Approximate date of award

EPA will consider all proposals that are submitted via Grants.gov by 11.59 p.m. EDT on 12/06/2015. Any proposals submitted after the due date and time will not be considered for funding. No proposals will be accepted by facsimile or e-mail. EPA will only accept proposals submitted via Grants.gov, except in limited circumstances where applicants have no or very limited Internet access (see section IV).

### **SUMMARY**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) is announcing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for applicants to provide the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partners with a proposal for administrative and technical support to the CBP's committees within the Partnership's collaborative decision-making management structure. This RFP is seeking cost-effective proposals from eligible applicants for providing administrative and technical staff support to the CBP Chesapeake Executive Council, Principals' Staff Committee, Management Board, Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, six Goal Implementation Teams, Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting team, and Communications Workgroup. Proposals should also include administrative, technical, and coordination support to the non-federal partners and the appropriate CBP technical workgroups for carrying out the stated missions of these committees, teams, and workgroups within the larger CBP management structure.

CBP partners include federal agencies, seven watershed jurisdictions, and many non-federal organizations; however, work funded under this RFP will support the seven watershed

jurisdictions and other non-federal partners. The seven watershed jurisdictions are Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

**FUNDING/AWARDS:** This RFP will cover the project period up to and including six years from an expected start date of **06/01/2016**. CBPO plans to award no more than two cooperative agreements under this RFP. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$6,000,000 to \$8,460,000, with an estimated \$1,000,000 to \$1,410,000 available for the first year and each additional year. There is no guarantee of funding throughout this period or beyond.

## **FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT**

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## **I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Background**

#### ***1. About the Chesapeake Bay Program***

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, CBP is responsible for supporting the Chesapeake Executive Council through a number of actions, including the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program. Pursuant to Section 117(b)(2) of the Clean Water Act, 33 USC 1267 (b)(2), CBPO is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the Executive Council in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. CBPO and CBP mentioned above are two distinct entities.

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

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

policy for Chesapeake Bay restoration. The Executive Council is established by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act. To ensure implementation of the Executive Council's Chesapeake Bay Agreements, the CBP partnership has several committees, teams, workgroups comprised of participating partners. The structure and governance of the program will change and evolve over time as a result of the CBP's application of adaptive management but the current organization includes the following:

The **Principals' Staff Committee (PSC)** acts as the senior policy advisors to the Executive Council, accepting items for their consideration and approval and setting agendas for Executive Council meetings. The PSC translates the restoration vision by setting policy and implementing actions on behalf of the Executive Council. The PSC also provides policy and program direction to the Management Board.

The **Management Board** provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the CBP. It directs and coordinates all of the goal teams and workgroups under it.

The **Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)** provides scientific and technical guidance to the Chesapeake Bay Program on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. Since its creation in December 1984, STAC has worked to enhance scientific communication and outreach throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed and beyond.

The CBP partnership also includes two other advisory committees: the Citizens' Advisory Committee and the Local Government Advisory Committee. Both of these committees are supported under different funding mechanisms.

The six **Goal Implementation Teams (GITs)**, listed below, along with the Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) team, include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Thus, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and others become active members of the broad restoration partnership. The Management Board can also convene short-term action teams as needed by the CBP partnership to focus on particular issues that are not currently under the purview of the GITs.

The **Sustainable Fisheries GIT** draws together a diverse group of managers and scientists to improve management and recovery of oysters, blue crab, menhaden, striped bass, and alosines. It focuses on advancing ecosystem-based fisheries management by using science to make informed fishery management decisions that cross state boundaries.

The **Habitat GIT** seeks to facilitate the implementation of projects that restore and enhance a network of land and water habitats to support priority species and to afford other public benefits, including water quality, recreational uses, and scenic value across the watershed by coordinating the efforts of CBP partners.

The charge of the **Water Quality GIT** is to evaluate, focus, and accelerate the implementation of practices, policies, and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to conditions that support living resources and protect human health.

The goal of the **Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT** is to maintain local watersheds at optimal health across a range of landscape contexts.

The charge of the **Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship GIT** is to increase citizen action, support environmental education for all ages, and assist citizens, communities, and local governments in undertaking initiatives to conserve treasured landscapes.

The charge of the **Enhancing Partnering, Leadership and Management GIT** is to continually improve the leadership and management of the CBP partnership and assist Bay stakeholders in building their capacity to become environmental leaders in their communities.

The **Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting Team** works to increase collaboration among science providers to provide monitoring, modeling, and analysis needed to update, explain, and communicate ecosystem condition and change to support the Chesapeake Bay Program's GITs.

The **Communications Workgroup** provides support for the communication needs of the CBP partners by spurring public action through consistent messaging, expanded media coverage, use of multimedia and online tools, comprehensive branding and promotion, outreach to stakeholders, and coordinated internal and external communications.

## ***2. 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement***

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

This cooperative agreement will help fulfill the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement's* sustainable fisheries, vital habitats, water quality, toxic contaminants, healthy watersheds, stewardship, land conservation, public access, environmental literacy, and climate resiliency goals and outcomes.

## **B. Scope of Work**

This RFP is seeking cost-effective proposals from eligible applicants to provide the CBP's non-federal partners with administrative and technical staff support to the CBP committees, GITs,

and workgroups as they work to restore the Chesapeake Bay and meet the goals and commitments contained in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. EPA seeks to support up to two organizations with: 1) The ability to build the capacity of environmental professionals (primarily those just entering the field) to work in a consensus-building committee structure such as the CBP partnership; and/or 2) Experience enhancing multi-partner, consensus-based environmental decision-making in the Chesapeake Bay watershed through the synthesis and application of scientific understanding of the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding watershed ecosystems. A single organization with experience in both areas may apply for both activities but in two separate applications, with each application addressing a single activity.

While the CBP partnership is comprised of federal and non-federal partners, any activities funded under this RFP will not directly benefit the federal partners. The recipient of the cooperative agreement awarded under this RFP may work directly with federal agencies, but the nature of the work will only directly benefit the non-federal agencies, partners, and the general public. The non-federal partners of the CBP will provide programmatic direction to the cooperative agreement recipient through the Executive Council, PSC, Management Board, six GITs, STAR, Communications Workgroup, and STAC and their underlying technical workgroups.

CBPO plans to award up to two cooperative agreements to carry out all activities under this RFP. The estimated funding for \$6,000,000 to \$8,460,000, with an estimated \$1,000,000 to \$1,410,000 available for the first year and each additional year.

If your organization has an interest in either activity under this project, has the skills to accomplish the activities, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit a proposal. Each eligible proposal will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activities are multi-year projects (up to six years), and the proposal should have a work plan and budget for the first year and an estimated budget detail for each of the subsequent five years.

Applicants must address each activity for which they are applying in their proposal:

**Activity 1: Chesapeake Bay Program Committee Staffing Support**

**Estimated Funding: \$700,000-\$920,000 per year (\$4,200,000 to \$5,520,000 over six years)**

This activity supports the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership in two ways: It provides administrative and technical staffing support for the CBP partnership's technical, management, and policy committees, GITs, and workgroups; and it increases the capacity, diversity, and development of the state, local, and NGO workforce committed to the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. This work will support CBP partnership's efforts to carry out the work needed to achieve the 10 goals and 31 underlying outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and the 25 management strategies and work plans developed to implement the outcomes. The following are examples of the types of activities required to carry out Activity 1. Applicants may consider these activities as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support.

- Provide professional development for the applicant's staff hired to carry out this activity through activities such as a variety of group trainings and educational experiences, individual professional experiences, volunteer activities, and by developing and implementing independent projects all of which allow the staffers to support the mission of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership efficiently and effectively
- Provide support to the Chesapeake Bay Program organization (committees, goal implementation teams, workgroups, action teams, etc.) in its effort to meet the goals outlined in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and the supporting Management Strategies by:
  - Scheduling, organizing, and developing agendas for meetings, conference calls, and webinars;
  - Producing minutes/summaries of meetings, conference call, and webinars;
  - Following through on follow-up actions and decisions agreed to during meetings, conference call, and webinars;
  - Creating content for and maintaining web pages on the CBP partnership's suite of websites;
  - Drafting, writing, preparing, and editing reports, documents, presentations, and other narrative and visual forms of communications; and
  - Conducting special projects as assigned, such as analyzing data, producing GIS maps, developing reports, running model scenarios, etc.

Historically, these staff support positions have been filled by entry-level environmental professionals with environmental, science, and/or government policy backgrounds. Applicants should show that support staff for this activity have strong written and oral communication skills, proficiency with computer software such as Microsoft Office (e.g. Word, Excel, and PowerPoint), and the ability to work with social networks and remote meeting technologies. The staffing support should be able to work with a variety of people, interests, and levels of government. The successful applicant should have the ability to work in a fast-paced environment on multiple priorities. In addition to the general skills and knowledge needed for all positions, below are specific areas of emphasis for the various committees, teams, and workgroups. Applicants should describe how they would provide support for these different groups given their unique areas of focus. For more information about the number of workgroups, meeting schedules, missions, and membership of each, refer to <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/about>.

*Management Board (monthly meetings), Principals' Staff Committee (quarterly meetings), Chesapeake Executive Council (annual meetings)*

These are units of the CBP partnership management organization for high-level officials that decide priorities, resolve conflicts among partners and remove barriers, and make the policy and budget decisions on ecosystem restoration policy. The applicant support staff should have solid meeting management techniques and diplomacy skills. Understanding how a multi-party governmental partnership makes decisions effectively and sets and achieves goals through collaborative processes is key as is a strong emphasis on summarization, documentation, and record-keeping of collaborative decisions and follow-up actions.

*Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team*

This Goal Implementation Team (GIT) focuses on fisheries management, fisheries ecosystem science and stock assessments, monitoring, and analyses.

*Restore Vital Habitats Goal Implementation Team*

This GIT focuses on ecosystem restoration in habitats such as wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), fish passage and/or streams, and coordinates with partnerships on brook trout and black duck. Applicants should have an understanding of large complexes of aquatic and terrestrial habitats and or a strong science background

*Water Quality Goal Implementation Team*

This GIT focuses on water quality policy and/or the law of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and the relationship between land use and water quality, particularly as they relates to toxics, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment reduction through a variety of pollutant source sectors.

*Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team*

This GIT focuses on protection and conservation approaches and is developing land-use metrics to show changes in land use and impervious cover, developing and collecting best practices to minimize development footprints, and techniques for conserving healthy watersheds and measuring success.

*Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship Goal Implementation Team*

This GIT focuses on public access, land conservation, citizen stewardship, diversity of involved partners and stakeholder, and environmental literacy with an emphasis on natural and social sciences, environmental management, policy, interpretation, education, and planning,. The team works collaboratively with watershed organizations and citizens to solve local environmental issues and develop and deliver environmental education programming.

*Enhance Partnership, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team*

This GIT focuses on the development and use of management tools such as adaptive management, decision support tools, performance measurements, and fostering local leadership. This team is charged with developing and maintaining the governance documents of the CBP and developing evaluation techniques to be used by the CBP.

*Scientific and Technical Assessment and Reporting Team*

This team focuses on monitoring, modeling, and assessments such as status and trends, and understanding and measuring factors that affect trends. It also provides support to all other teams in understanding and adapting to climate change and resiliency. Applicant support staff should be proficient with data management and analysis, including use of spreadsheets, databases, and graphics software to present results of data analyses. Familiarity with ecological and environmental monitoring programs and analyses is also essential.

#### *Communications Workgroup*

This workgroup is responsible for the CBP communications to the public and media through press releases and events and the use of social media and web postings. Applicant support staff should have good writing, editing, and communication skills, web writing, and computer skills.

### **Activity 2: Chesapeake Bay Program Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee Support**

**Estimated Funding: \$300,000-\$490,000 per year (\$1,800,000 to \$2,940,000 over six years)**

The CBP partnership's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) provides scientific and technical guidance to the CBP partnership on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and to enhance the ability of the CBP partnership to make environmentally sound decisions.

STAC continues to be an integral component of the CBP partnership's collaborative decision-making management structure. The currently 38-member advisory committee includes internationally acclaimed representatives affiliated with major universities and research institutions in the Chesapeake Bay watershed who were appointed by governors, federal agencies, and members of the scientific and technical community.

STAC focuses the Chesapeake Bay watershed and national scientific and technical communities' expertise towards the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed by:

- Setting priorities on scientific and technical issues of direct relevance to resource management decision-making directed toward Bay and watershed restoration and protection;
- Evaluating CBP partnership issues and programs from the perspective of scientific integrity;
- Providing guidance on scientific research and technical products through independent scientific peer reviews;
- Identifying emerging scientific and technical issues and challenges to achieving Bay and watershed restoration and protection goals well before they become mainstream topics of management focus;



- Conducting workshops, evaluations, and independent scientific peer reviews to address specific issues of interest to restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed; and
- Synthesizing, evaluating, disseminating, and communicating scientific information of direct relevance to restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

The following are examples of the types of activities required to carry out Activity 2. Applicants may consider these tasks as well as describe alternative approaches to providing the requested support.

In support of STAC, the cooperative agreement recipient will carry out the following activities:

- Schedule and provide for the full administrative and logistical support to STAC for its quarterly two-day meetings. This support may include developing agendas, lining up speakers and presenters, ensuring delivery of advance briefing and presentation materials, drafting summaries, and posting all relevant meeting materials on the STAC website in a timely manner. The successful applicant will provide this support by identifying emerging issues, assessing performance of CBP activities, and addressing issues brought to the committee by various parts of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's management structure.
- Directly assist STAC in its efforts to identify, prioritize, and synthesize relevant findings and evaluate possible management implications of emerging scientific and technical issues facing the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its surrounding watershed.
- Provide a full range of administrative and logistical support to STAC in scheduling and conducting its sponsored technical workshops, scientific and technical conferences, workgroups, task forces, evaluations, and independent scientific peer reviews. This includes assisting in the development, review, and publication of proceedings of each of these forums.
- Support the continued annual implementation of the established STAC workshops' protocol from the annual requests to the larger Chesapeake Bay Program partnership for scientific and technical workshops proposals all the way through to receipt of the CBP partnership's formal responses to findings and recommendations from each proactive and reactive workshop.
- Support STAC's preparation of scientific and technical reports, papers, and synthesizes scientific literature on management- relevant topics.
- Support STAC's convening of rapid-response review teams, scheduling small meetings or assembling expert panels to respond to CBP partnership management requests for scientific review/technical synthesis/evaluation.

- Support STAC members in providing direct assistance to individual GITs, STAR, and workgroups on an as requested/as needed basis by providing STAC members expertise directly to GIT, STAR or workgroup deliberations.
- Help organize and provide administrative oversight and logistical support for CBP-partnership-requested (and STAC-convened) independent, scientific peer reviews of reports, models, and monitoring programs following established STAC-peer-review procedures.
- Assist in the identification and dissemination of scientific research priorities for supporting implementation of the goals and outcomes within the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and the supporting management strategies and implementation work plans.
- Support the active participation by STAC members in meetings of the CBP's Executive Council, PSC, Management Board, CAC, LGAC, GITs, STAR, and workgroups.
- On behalf of STAC, interact directly and frequently and coordinate routinely with the chairs and coordinators of CAC, LGAC, PSC, Management Board, GITs, and STAR to stay abreast of the management-relevant emerging-scientific and -technical issues and needs.
- Support efforts by STAC to help the CBP partnership to effectively carry out adaptive management as called for in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* by:
  - Working to constantly improve the effectiveness of the management programs by helping to design, and evaluate the results of, a process for continually reducing the uncertainty in management strategies;
  - Implementing the CBP partnership's decision framework, including developing detailed predictions of expected future system behavior and responses to management actions based on current scientific understanding of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and it's watershed; and
  - Ensuring the continued operation of well-designed monitoring programs that will enable the CBP partnership's constant assessment of the relative effectiveness of the collective set of management actions taken and use of that information in adaptive management.
- Support STAC in ensuring the continued adherence to the CBP/STAC Communication Protocol and maintain a public record of the results of STAC-sponsored workshops, conferences, evaluations, and peer reviews, and corresponding CBP responses to the resultant findings and recommendations.
- Actively maintain and routinely update the STAC website to keep STAC members, CBP partners, and other website users informed about the full array of past, present, and planned STAC activities, including on-going projects, meetings, workshops, reviews,

evaluations, and publications as well as STAC's findings and recommendations reported back to the CBP partnership.

### ***Obtaining Additional Information***

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

## **C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs**

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>).

### **1. Linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan**

The overall objective of this grant is to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem through increased public awareness and public engagement in addressing water-quality restoration goals and Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. Under EPA's FY2014–2018 Strategic Plan (see: <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>), this objective supports Strategic Goal #2: Protecting America's Waters; Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems; specifically, Improve the Health of the Chesapeake Bay Ecosystem. The project funded under this announcement must be linkable to these strategic goals.

### **2. Outputs**

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

#### **Activity 1:**

- Increased number of meetings and conference calls scheduled, with the agenda developed and advance briefing materials and presentations posted online with link to CBP web site calendar (<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar>) within a week of each meeting/conference call.
- Increased use of conference calls, webinars and other means of more efficient use of the CBP partnership members' time in conducting the work of the partnership while maintaining the collaborative decision-making process.
- Increased number of milestones listed in the management strategies and annual implementation work plans achieved on time by the CBP partnership.

### Activity 2:

- Increased number of STAC meetings scheduled, with the agenda developed and advance briefing materials and presentations posted on-line on the STAC web site with link to CBP web site calendar (<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar>) within a week of each meeting/conference call.
- Increased number of STAC-sponsored workshop and conference proceedings published within six months of the original date of the workshop/conference.
- Increased number of STAC-sponsored, independent scientific peer review reports published within two months of the original date of the conclusion of the peer review panel.
- Increased number of management agency challenges taken on and addressed by STAC through a combination of meetings, workshops, reviews, and/or special teams.

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

### **3. Outcomes**

The term “outcome” means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. An example of an outcome under this proposal under Activity 1 is the increased ability by the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership to make collaborative decisions needed to carry out the work required to meeting the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. Another example under Activity 2 is increased public acceptance of the necessary actions to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed due to higher levels of confidence in the scientific basis of those needed restoration and protection actions.

### **D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations**

The grant made as a result of this announcement is authorized under the Clean Water Act, Section 117(d). Under Section 117(d) (1) of the Act, EPA has the authority to issue grants and cooperative agreements for the purposes of protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. This project is subject to the Office of Management and Budget' (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 CFR Part 1500).

## **II: AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards**

CBPO plans to award up to two cooperative agreements under this RFP. Total funding for the activity listed above is approximately \$1,000,000 to \$1,410,000 annually for FY2016 through FY2021, depending on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$6,000,000 to

\$8,460,000. For the split in funding by activity, see the descriptions of the activities in I.B. above.

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

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

## **B. Award Type**

Successful applicants will be issued a cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of “substantial involvement” as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient’s performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

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

## **C. Partial Funding**

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

## **D. Expected Project Period**

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is six years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFP is **06/01/2016**.

## **E. Pre-Award Costs**

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

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

## **III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

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

### **B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements**

Pursuant to Clean Water Act 117(d)(2)(A), the agency shall determine the cost-share requirements for awards. The CFDA Number 66.466 states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost-share ranging from five to 50 percent of eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For this RFP, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of five percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share. (See Appendix A, Section 3.ii. for more detail)

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

### **C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

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

1. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the narrative proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
2. In addition, initial proposals must be submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.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) on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their proposal/application is timely submitted.
3. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov) system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal/application through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov) or [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with James Hargett at [Hargett.james@epa.gov](mailto:Hargett.james@epa.gov) (see Section VII, Agency Contact) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal [or application] not being reviewed.
4. The project funded under this announcement must be linked to the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.
5. For a proposal to be considered eligible for funding, substantive project-related work included in the proposal must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia.
6. Proposals must show how they will meet the five percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B.
7. Proposals requesting funding for more than \$920,000 for the first year or more than \$5,520,000 for the full six years for Activity 1, or funding for more than \$490,000 for the first year or more than \$2,940,000 for the full six years for Activity 2 will be rejected.
8. Proposals must address Activity 1 or Activity 2 listed in Section I.B. in the RFP to be considered. Applicants can apply to address both listed activities, but only in separate proposals each addressing a single activity. A single organization with experience in both areas may apply for both activities but in two separate applications, with each application addressing a single activity. Applicants that address more than one activity in a proposal will be rejected.

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

## **IV: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. How to Obtain a Proposal Package**

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

### **B. Content and Form of Proposal Submission**

Each proposal will be evaluated using the criteria referenced in Section V.B. of this announcement. You must submit a single-spaced proposal of up to 15 pages in length by the date and time specified in Section IV.C below. The format for this proposal is contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the proposal. Proposals that are not prepared in substantial compliance with the requirements in Appendix A will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

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

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

### **Requirements for Narrative Proposal — See Appendix A**

All proposal review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the proposal. The proposal shall not exceed 15 pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10 and the proposal must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper. Note that the 15 pages include all supporting materials, including budget, budget detail, resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support. With the exception of documentation of non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, and the SF-424, if you submit more than 15 pages, the



additional pages will be discarded and will not be reviewed. See Appendix A for additional instructions.

### **C. Intergovernmental Review**

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. This program is eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372, An Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her state for more information on that state's required process for applying for assistance if the state has selected the program for review. Single Points of Contact can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

### **D. Funding Restrictions**

#### **Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority**

Grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirements for “Administrative Costs” under the Clean Water Act, Section 117 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award (annual grant award = federal share plus cost-share). **Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet** is provided as an example of a method to calculate the 10-percent limitation. You are not required to submit Appendix B with your proposal.

#### **Allowable Costs**

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

### **E. Requirement to Submit through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures**

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

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

Courier Address:  
OGD Waivers  
c/o Barbara Perkins  
Ronald Reagan Building  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Rm # 51267  
Washington, DC 20004

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

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

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

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2015, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2015). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year, and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2015 with a

submission deadline of January 15, 2015, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2015.

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

## **F. Submission Instructions**

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

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

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through Grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3-CBP-15-07, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.466), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to

<http://www.grants.gov> and click “Browse Agencies” in the middle of the page and then go to “Environmental Protection Agency” to find the EPA funding opportunities.

### **Proposal Submission Deadline**

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than 5 p.m. EDT on **12/06/2015**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

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

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from Grants.gov*) within 30 days of the proposal/application deadline, please contact the person listed in Section VII of this announcement. Failure to do so may result in your proposal/application not being reviewed.

### **Application Materials**

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. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IV.B. of the announcement

### **G. Technical Issues With Submission**

1. Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced or a revised application needs to be submitted.

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear. ***Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.*** The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.

A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission.

Note: Grants.gov issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.

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

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact James Hargett at (410) 267-5743.

b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to James Hargett prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.

c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to James Hargett with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

## **H. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation**

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation\\_provisions.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions

electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

solicitation to obtain the provisions.

## V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### A. Evaluation Process

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

### B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 219 points

Criteria	Points
<p><b>1. Organizational Capability and Program Description:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on:</p> <p>a. The quality of the proposal and how it demonstrates the ability to timely and successfully achieve the activity to support the CBP partners as described in Section I.B (<b>35 points</b>).</p> <p>b. How well the proposal demonstrates that the applicant has the skill, experience, and resources to support the work of multiple management agencies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholders focused on collaborative decision-making on complex topics of high visibility and impact (<b>30 points</b>).</p>	65
<p><b>2. Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the applicant based on their programmatic capability to successfully perform the proposed activity, taking into account the applicant's:</p> <p>a. Past performance in successfully completing federally- and non-federally-funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements). Successful completion of federally-funded assistance agreements also includes your organization's history of meeting reporting requirements and submission of acceptable final technical reports under those agreements (<b>10 points</b>).</p> <p>b. Extent and quality to which the applicant adequately documented and/or reported on their progress in achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes</p>	60

<p>and outputs) under federal agency assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and, if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not <b>(10 points)</b>.</p> <p>c. Skill and experience in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Hiring and managing staff to carry out roles and responsibilities of similar complexity to what is described in Section I.B. <b>(10 points)</b></li> <li>ii. How well your organization became fully functional in the roles and responsibilities described in Section I.B. once a grant was awarded, and how you brought about a seamless transition in the provision of staff support for a multi-agency organization. <b>(10 points)</b></li> <li>iii. How well your organization provided the staff who possessed or could be trained in the specialized skills needed to achieve the mission of a multi-agency organization. <b>(10 points)</b></li> <li>iv. How well your organization provided continued high-quality staff support over multiple years. <b>(10 points)</b></li> </ul> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under Items a. and b. of these criteria, the reviewers will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors; 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 zero for these subfactors.</p>	
<p><b>3. Cost-effectiveness:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the proposal is cost-effective, considering the following factors: organizational overhead and ability to perform the duties within the operational range of budgets for each activity listed in Section I.</p>	20
<p><b>4. Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the proposal includes an adequate plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gather information and lessons learned from the project(s) <b>(10 points)</b>.</li> <li>b. Transfer the documentation/information/data/results/recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner <b>(10 points)</b>.</li> </ul>	20
<p><b>5. Modernization of Methods Over Time:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the extent the proposal addresses the development of recommendations for changes to the existing process for how the Goal Implementation Teams can make more effective and more timely decisions</p>	30



under the Partnership's new governance procedures (Activity 1). Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the extent the proposal addresses the development of recommendations for changes to the existing processes for how the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee can be more effective and more timely in providing expert advice to the Partnership for implementation of management strategies under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (Activity 2).	
<b>6. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds:</b> Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.	20

### C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible proposals will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in Section V.B. above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and possibly other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked proposals to the director or deputy director of CBPO for final selection. A separate selection decision will be made for each Activity listed in Section I.B. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider programmatic goals and priorities, as described in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, Management Strategies, Chesapeake Bay Executive Order Action Plan, Bay TMDL, and the Bay TMDL's associated WIPs and milestones. Information about the Executive Order, Bay TMDL, and *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* are available on the following websites: <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/>, <http://www2.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl>, and <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page>.

## VI: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that applicants will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around 12/28/2015 either via email or U.S. Postal Service. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Region 3 grants office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official is authorized to bind the government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application package. A federal project officer provides assistance in the application process and negotiates a



work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

## **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

If your proposal is selected, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at:

<http://www.epa.gov/region03/grants/2013AppKit.pdf>.

### **Federal Requirements**

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

### **Indirect Costs**

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

If a state or local government does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E (Section 200.414), and Appendix VII to Part 200. The state or local government recipient whose cognizant federal agency has been designated by OMB must develop and submit its indirect cost rate proposal to its cognizant agency within six months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year. If the cognizant federal agency has not been identified by OMB, the state or local government recipient must still develop (and when required, submit) its proposal within that period. Per 2 CFR Section 200.414(f) and Appendix VII to Part 200, Section D.1.b, if the state or local government has never received a negotiated indirect rate and if it receives \$35,000,000 or less in direct Federal funding, it may opt to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which may be used indefinitely. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the aforementioned regulations regarding indirect costs.

### **Incurred Costs**

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

## **EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans**

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

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

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

## **Deliverables**

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

## **C. Reporting**

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

## **D. Disputes**

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/dispute-resolution-procedures>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement.

## **E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation**

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These, and the other

provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

## **VII: Agency Contact**

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFP, please contact James Hargett via email at [hargett.james@epa.gov](mailto:hargett.james@epa.gov). All questions must be received in writing via email or fax at 410-267-5777 with the reference line referring to this RFP (Re: RFP EPA-R3-CBP-15-07). All questions and answers will be posted on <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>.

## **VIII: OTHER INFORMATION**

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

*Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Management Strategies*

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

Electronic copy of the *CBP Guidance for Data Management*

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

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

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

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

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

Further information on Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee:

<http://www.chesapeake.org/stac>

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

**Appendix A**  
**Proposal Format**  
**U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III**  
**Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2015 Request for Proposals (RFP) for**  
***Chesapeake Bay Program Committees Support***  
**EPA-R3-CBP-15-07**

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

**Format:** Narrative proposals as described below shall not exceed 15 single-spaced pages. The proposal must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 15 pages must include all supporting materials, including resumes or curriculum vitae and letters of support. With the exception of documentation of non-profit status, cost share letters of commitment, and the SF-424, if the proposal includes more than 15 pages, the additional pages will be discarded and not considered in the review. Applicants must submit one proposal for each Activity they wish to compete and should ensure it clearly identifies the Activity number. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

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

**2. Background** - Include the following in this section:

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

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

- i) A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements of the Program as described in Section I of the announcement;
- ii) Budget: For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a budget detail breakdown by the major budget categories (i.e. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). In each of the budgets, include the cost share amount (a minimum of five percent of the total project costs) and demonstrate how the cost share will be met, including, if applicable, letters of commitment from any third-party contributors. Please note that subaward costs must be included in the “Other” budget costs category. For an example budget detail, please go to: <http://www.epa.gov/region03/grants/2013AppKit.pdf>, page 27. In addition, grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirement for “Administrative Costs” under the Clean Water Act, Section 117 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent administration cost cap is located in Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet. To calculate the specific cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

- 1) EPA amount (including any in-kind)  $\div$  95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
- 2) 100% of Total Grant Amount  $\times$  5% = Applicant’s Cost-Share Amount

Based upon the annual funding estimate of \$1,000,000 to \$1,410,000 per year, the minimum annual cost share is calculated to be \$52,632 to \$74,211 annually.

- iii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the proposal will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project.
  1. Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outputs include:
    - Increased number of meetings and conference calls scheduled, with the agenda developed and advance briefing materials and presentations posted on-line with link to CBP web site calendar within a week in advance of each meeting/conference call.
    - Increased use of conference calls, webinars and other means of more efficient use of the CBP Partnership members’ time in conducting the work of the Partnership while maintaining the collaborative decision making process.
    - Increased number of milestones listed in the management strategies and annual implementation work plans achieved on time by the CBP Partnership.
    - Increased number of STAC meetings scheduled, with the agenda developed and advance briefing materials and presentations posted on-line on the STAC web site with link to CBP web site calendar within a week in advance of each meeting/conference call.

- Increased number of STAC sponsored workshop and conference proceedings published within six months of the original date of the workshop/conference.
- Increased number of STAC sponsored independent scientific peer review reports published within two months of the original date of the conclusion of the peer review panel.

2. Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. An example of an outcome under this proposal is the increased ability by the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership to make collaborative decisions needed to carry out the work required to meeting the goals and outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Another example is increased public acceptance of what actions are needed to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed due to higher levels of confidence in the scientific basis of those need restoration and protection actions.

iv) Review Criteria: Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFP. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative. With specific respect to the Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance factor in V.B:

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

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

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project as well as your staff's

expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

**Appendix B**  
**EPA-R3-CBP-15-07**

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

**CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST**  
**CAP WORKSHEET**

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

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

**Line (b) cannot exceed Line (a).**



## **COMPLIANCE WITH CWA SECTION 117 RESTRICTING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS**

### **Statutory Authority**

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

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

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

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

### Guidance for Determining Administrative Costs

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

#### 1. Administrative Costs

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

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

#### 2. Non-administrative Costs

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

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

#### 3. Calculation of Administrative Costs

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

#### 4. Questions Regarding Administrative Costs

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