

EPA Region 6 Fiscal Year 2016 Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP) Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

EPA-Tribal Environmental Plans (ETEPs): The May 15, 2013 Guidance on the Award and Management of General Assistance Agreements for Tribes and Intertribal Consortia (GAP Guidance) requires each Tribal grantee to negotiate a joint EPA-Tribal Environmental Plan with the Agency and identifies broad requirements for the content of ETEPs. Under the GAP Guidance, work plan activities proposed by tribes must be linked to an ETEP. The ETEP should be a living document that is actively used as a management tool by both EPA and the tribe to ensure work is being done in support of agreed upon priorities and that progress toward intermediate and long-term goals is made over time. EPA initiated the development of ETEPs with tribes beginning in Fall 2012. Tribes will be contacted by their EPA Project Officer to schedule the development and implementation of an ETEP in the 2016 application workplan if they have not started the development of the ETEP. Once an ETEP is approved by both the tribe and EPA, then the ETEP Priorities will be used to evaluate the GAP grant application work plan. Program development components will be tied back to the Priorities identified in the approved ETEP.

Using Indicators of Tribal Environmental Program Capacity

All GAP grant work plans must include Program Capacity Indicators. When identifying fundable GAP activities, the program capacity building indicators in Appendix 1 of the GAP Guidance will be added to the “Component” section of the GAP Online work plan. Applicants will insert the Capacity Indicator language in the “Measures” box of the appropriate Component. Capacity Indicators are a useful resource because they provide specific examples of milestones that GAP-funded activities, or a combination of activities, could support toward building environmental program capacity, consistent with EPA’s environmental protection programs. These indicators offer a non-exclusive menu of choices organized by category of environmental program development. There is not just one pathway to follow for building environmental program capacity, and as such there are many indicators that can be used to assess and measure progress in the capacity building process. Tribes should contact their EPA Project Officer for further information.

GAP supports development of tribal environmental protection programs that are consistent with the federal laws the EPA is charged with implementing. A GAP grant offers a unique opportunity for a tribe to build capacity necessary to administer its own integrated environmental program, develop the capability to manage specific programs and establish a core program for environmental protection. Activities eligible for funding under this program are those for planning, developing, and establishing capability to implement environmental protection programs consistent with Agency standards and regulations. Additional allowable activities under GAP include the development and implementation of Solid and Hazardous Waste (SW/HW) projects consistent with national guidance.

II. Performance Partnership Grants (PPG)

The GAP grant may also be used as part of Tribal Performance Partnership Grants (PPG). A PPG may streamline some administrative requirements, give recipients greater flexibility to direct resources to their most pressing environmental problems, and make it easier to fund efforts that cut across program boundaries. For more information refer to 40 CFR 35, Subpart B – Environmental Program Grants for Tribes (§35.530), or contact the EPA Project Officer.

III. Award Information

We request your GAP application include work plan activities with a budget no greater than \$125,000 per year. Final funding amounts will depend on work plan negotiations with your Project Officer and availability of GAP funds. Some GAP awards may be reduced due to prior GAP performance problems, such as uncompleted deliverables, late reporting and consistently high account balances. GAP awards may also be reduced due to determination of final GAP allocation received from EPA American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) based on Congressional Appropriation. GAP grant project periods may not exceed four years, but at the end of a four-year grant period, tribes and intertribal consortium may apply for new GAP grants. Successful applicants will receive assistance in either the form of a Grant Agreement or a Cooperative Agreement. Applicants are not required to provide any matching share of GAP project costs.

For Fiscal Year 2016, the Region's funding priorities will be:

- 1) Funding of no greater than \$125,000 for eligible tribal applicants;
- 2) Funding of no greater than \$125,000 for a limited number of eligible consortium;
- 3) Funding of two-year work plans.

Evaluations of applications will be based on the following:

- 1) Meeting Application Deadlines
- 2) Unliquidated Obligation Account Balances
- 3) Reporting
- 4) Prior Progress and Performance
- 5) Capacity Indicators
- 6) Environmental Capacity Needs
- 7) Components and Commitments
- 8) Long-term and Intermediate Outcomes
- 9) Outcomes and Deliverables
- 10) Reasonable and Allowable Costs

IV. Eligibility Information

Eligible applicants include Region 6 Federally Recognized Indian Tribes and Intertribal Consortium. An Intertribal Consortium is eligible to receive a GAP award if the Consortium demonstrates that: (1) A majority of its members are eligible to receive GAP grants; (2) All members that meet the eligibility requirements authorize the Consortium to apply for and receive the award; and (3) Adequate accounting controls are in place to ensure that only members that meet the eligibility requirements will benefit directly from the award and the Consortium agrees to an award condition to that effect. Please see Section 2.3 of the GAP Guidance for further information.

V. Application and Submission Information

Applications

A full grant application, workplan and budget must be received by electronic submission through Grants.gov by 11:59 pm CST on **February 12, 2016**. If an applicant is interested in submitting a PPG, please notify the EPA Project Officer immediately to obtain the application process and procedures.

A full grant application includes the following items:

- 1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF424)
- 2) Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (**SF 424A Pages 1-2, must also be submitted in GAP Online**)
- 3) Budget Narrative (**must also be submitted in GAP Online**)
- 4) Work Plan (**must also be submitted in GAP Online**)
- 5) Assurances Non Construction Programs (SF 424B)
- 6) Certification Regarding Lobbying (EPA Form 6600-06)
- 7) Pre-award Compliance Review Report (4700-4)
- 8) Key Contact Form (Form Approved OMB No: 2030-0020)
- 9) Copy of Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

The GAP Online User Guide can be found at

<http://www2.epa.gov/tribal/indian-environmental-general-assistance-program-gap>

The following procedure has been outlined for addressing applications not meeting the deadline:

- 1) The Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal and International Affairs (OEJTIA) will contact Tribal leadership and environmental staff by phone or written communication regarding the missed deadline.
- 2) The grantee will be notified that they will be granted a two week extension for submitting a complete application to Grants.gov. February 26, 2016 will be the new deadline for late applications to be considered with a budget range of **\$75,000 - \$100,000** per year.

- 3) If an application is not received by February 26, 2016, OEJTIA will contact the grantee and inform them that they will be considered only for the base funding amount of **\$75,000**. An additional time extension will be granted for no longer than March 11, 2016 to submit a complete application for the base amount funding to Grants.gov.
- 4) Any application submitted after March 11, 2016 will not be considered for GAP funding.

EPA Order 5700.7 “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,” requires a direct link between work plan commitments and environmental results. Therefore, the OEJTIA will emphasize well defined outputs and outcomes that can be linked to environmental results and measures. Copies of the Order are available upon request.

An acceptable work plan must be consistent with 40 CFR Part 35.507, which requires work years and funding level estimates for components. At the request of the national program office, a template is available upon request for your use.

We are again offering the option of submitting two-year GAP work plans. Please remember that the GAP statute limits project and budget periods to no more than four years. Thus, if you are currently in the third year of your GAP grant and would like to submit a two-year work plan, you must be willing to close your current GAP grant and begin a new grant cycle.

VI. Award Administration

The Region 6 Grant Office will be emailing assistance agreements and other correspondence to recipients. The Office of Grants and Debarment is eliminating the requirement for recipients to submit a signed Affirmation of Award for new awards or amendments. The Notice of Award section of the agreement will allow recipients to demonstrate their commitment to carry out an award by either: 1) drawing down funds within 21 days after the EPA award or amendment mailing date; or 2) not filing a notice of disagreement with the award terms and conditions within 21 days after the EPA award mailing date.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Regulations governing the award and the administration of environmental programs for tribes and tribal consortium can be found in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 31 and 35, Subpart B (40 CFR 35.500-35.518).

Reporting

At a minimum, grantees will be required to submit an annual programmatic progress report within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year using GAP Online. However, some grantees may be required or may negotiate to submit either semiannual or quarterly programmatic progress reports. Semiannual reports are due 30 days after the end of the 2nd fiscal quarter and 30 days after the end of the fiscal year. Quarterly reports are due 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter. Programmatic reports must document the progress in performing the commitments listed in the work plan and the reports must describe any problems with completing the commitments

and the recipient's plan for resolving the problems. Programmatic reports must comply with the regulations listed in CFR 40 Part 31.40 and CFR 40 Part 35.515.

Federal Financial Reports (FFRs) are required and must, at a minimum, be submitted within 90 days of the end of the project period. However, some grantees may be required or may negotiate to submit FFRs more frequently. A Final FFR must be submitted within 90 days of the assistance agreement's expiration. FFRs must comply with all the Assistance Agreement's Terms and Conditions as well as with the regulations listed in CFR 40 Part 31.41.

VII. Agency Contacts

For further information please feel free to contact the OEJTIA Tribal Team at 800-887-6063. Or via mail at:

U.S. EPA Region 6 (6RA-DT)
Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal and International Affairs
1445 Ross Avenue, 12th Floor
Dallas, Texas 75202-2733

VIII. Other Information

A website link to the Indian General Assistance Program information and documents are available at: <http://www2.epa.gov/tribal/indian-environmental-general-assistance-program-gap>.

Please note if the workplan includes purchases of "light refreshments, meals or beverages" to be provided at a planned meeting, conference, training workshop or outreach activity (event), the budget narrative must include an estimate of the costs associated with the light refreshments, meals or beverages. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact your EPA Project Officer.