

Federal Agency Name: U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Immediate Office

Funding Opportunity Title: Support to the National Tribal Water Council

Announcement Type: Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-IO-16-01

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.424, 66.436

Dates: The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **Friday, July 15th, 2016 by 11:59 PM, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) in order to be considered for funding.** Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov no later than **11:59 PM EDT Friday, July 15th, 2016, in order to be considered for funding.**

Questions about this Request for Applications must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency contact identified in Section VII before **Friday, July 1st, 2016.** Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at [Grant Programs for Tribes](#). Please note answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) are available at [Grant Programs for Tribes](#). EPA strongly recommends interested applicants refer to the FAQs website prior to submitting a question.

Note to Applicants: Following EPA's evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your application as partners to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the Contracts and Subawards Provision found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water (OW) is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to conduct, coordinate, and promote the acceleration of research, studies, training, and demonstration projects that will support the participation of the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC or "Council") and tribes to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution to waters, and protect drinking water in Indian country. The successful applicant will support the NTWC, comprised of representatives of federally-recognized tribes with technical expertise on water quality and drinking water programs, to increase national tribal awareness and expertise, and address tribal issues consistent with the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The successful applicant will maintain, support, and facilitate the operations of the NTWC, and assist in developing and completing products in coordination with the NTWC on the quality of tribal water resources, watersheds, drinking water, and wastewater sanitation from tribal perspectives. The scope of this work includes: 1) support the operation of the Council as a national forum for tribal water managers, and provide logistical support for the Council's actions so that the Council may interact with each other, with tribes, and with EPA; 2) assisting the NTWC to promote technical information exchange and sharing of best management practices for addressing water quality and drinking water concerns to tribes and EPA; 3) assisting the NTWC

to conduct outreach activities to benefit tribes on water resource protection and restoration topics; and 4) conducting studies in coordination with the NTWC that identify and analyze high priority, water-related issues and actions from tribal perspectives related to the SDWA and the CWA. These actions are intended to support and reflect individual tribal perspectives from across the nation, and to be conducted and coordinated through the NTWC. Funds awarded under this announcement will also be used by the recipient to support NTWC member travel expenses for participation at meetings as identified in the cooperative agreement (i.e., funding of travel expenses of NTWC members).

The activities to be funded under this announcement are consistent with the Agency's Strategic Plan, Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters, Objective 2.1: Protect Human Health, as well as Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. EPA's Strategic Plan is available at [EPA Strategic Plan](#).

States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories, possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public or private non-profit institutions are eligible to apply. Individuals are not eligible to apply. For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. The statutory authority for this announcement is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA and Section 1442 of the SDWA.

The total amount of expected funding available under this announcement is approximately \$1,100,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. EPA anticipates that one award will be made under this announcement. The anticipated project period for the award is five years. EPA anticipates that the award will be funded incrementally at \$220,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, available funding levels, and satisfactory performance of the recipient. EPA plans to provide EPA contractor assistance as a form of in-kind assistance for this project. The EPA contractor will assist the successful applicant with the general logistical activities necessary to support the NTWC. Specific activities to be undertaken by the EPA contractor under EPA direction will be determined during the pre-award negotiation process with the selected recipient.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. BACKGROUND

There are over 560 distinct Indian tribal governments recognized as sovereign entities by the U.S. government that use water resources for drinking, fishing and subsistence, transportation, ceremonial purposes and more. Indian tribes are responsible for protecting and restoring thousands of square miles of rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands, as well as ground water. In addition, tribes living on or near the coast are largely dependent on coastal resources. Each tribe faces a set of challenges in protecting these resources and ensuring the health of their members and communities. Tribes have responsibilities and opportunities as environmental co-regulators under EPA statutes to play a major role in protecting the water resources vital to their existence, and many are seeking to develop comprehensive and effective water quality programs to improve and protect water quality on tribal lands. To support and enhance tribal efforts, EPA has previously awarded cooperative agreements to establish and support a national council of tribal government representatives with technical expertise in tribal water programs that focus on water topics in Indian country consistent with the CWA and SDWA, called the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC). Over the last eight years, the NTWC has operated to

- Provide a unique platform to facilitate and enhance tribal participation, input, training, and information exchange among tribes, and operate as a network for tribes to build capacity to protect and restore water quality on tribal lands and increase tribal awareness on a wide variety of tribal water resource and watershed issues.
- Promote sharing of technical information and best management practices to improve and preserve water quality and provide adequate sanitation and safe drinking water in tribal communities.
- Identify and analyze high-priority water-related issues and actions from tribal perspectives.
- Encourage the development and enhancement of tribal water resource protection programs.
- Raise tribal water program issues to EPA, and offer input on national water policy initiatives affecting tribes.

NTWC members are tribal government representatives with technical expertise in widely varied water programs, including ground and surface water protection, watershed management, water quality monitoring, water quality permitting, and the operation of waste water facilities and drinking water systems. Members may also include other interested tribal representatives who are found to meet qualification requirements set by the NTWC by-laws. The current membership of the Council provides for 15 representatives from 15 federally recognized Tribes (nine to represent each EPA Region with federally recognized Tribes, and six at-large members to represent additional tribes, such as Alaska Native Villages).

If requested, the Agency will provide the successful applicant with materials developed under previous cooperative agreements (i.e., material developed with EPA funding as authorized by 2

CFR 200.315). For more information on the NTWC, please visit [National Tribal Water Council](#).

For the purposes of this announcement, the words “tribe” and its derivatives refer to Indian tribal entities identified as federally recognized by the United States Department of Interior, which includes tribes within the contiguous 48 states, and native entities within the state of Alaska (Alaska Native Villages and Alaska Tribes). The term “Indian country” means: (1) all land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and including rights-of-way running throughout the reservation; (2) all dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States, whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of the state; and (3) all Indian allotments, the Indian titles to which have not been extinguished, including rights-of-way running through the same.

B. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The cooperative agreement awarded under this announcement is intended to fund a successful applicant to conduct, coordinate, and promote the acceleration of research, studies, training, and demonstration projects that will support the participation of the NTWC and tribes to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution to waters, and protect drinking water in Indian country. Applicant's should describe an approach to maintain, support, and facilitate the operations of the NTWC, and assist in developing and completing products in coordination with the NTWC related to protecting and restoring tribal water quality and providing wastewater sanitation under the CWA and protecting groundwater and providing safe drinking water under the SDWA, from tribal perspectives.

The scope of this work includes the following project elements: 1) support the operation of the Council as a national forum and network for tribal water managers, and provide logistical support so that the Council may interact with each other, with tribes, and directly with EPA; 2) assisting the NTWC to promote technical water program-focused information exchange and sharing of best management practices for addressing water quality and drinking water concerns to tribes and EPA; 3) assisting the NTWC to conduct outreach activities to benefit tribes on water resource protection and restoration topics; and 4) conducting studies in coordination with the NTWC that identify and analyze high priority, water-related issues and actions from tribal perspectives related to the SDWA and the CWA.

As part of its application, the successful applicant is expected to describe the technical approach for accomplishing the project elements described below. The project elements listed below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in carrying out specific work objectives under the cooperative agreement. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive, and applicants are encouraged to identify additional project elements (i.e., not included in this announcement) that may contribute to their overall vision for project success in their applications. However, the project elements will be used during the application review process (as indicated in the ranking criteria in Section V.A.), and thus may provide guidance as applicants decide what activities will be needed to successfully meet the objectives described in this announcement.

Note, as further described below, EPA plans to have a contractor assist with the general logistical activities necessary to support the NTWC each year as a form of in-kind assistance to the successful applicant.

Project Element 1: Support Operation and Logistics of NTWC

The successful applicant will support the operation of the Council, and logistics of the Council's actions as a national forum for interactions with tribes and EPA. The components of this project element may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Propose updates to the NTWC by-laws as necessary to ensure effectiveness in achieving NTWC goals and objectives.
- b. Support NTWC membership in consultation with the NTWC and EPA. Conduct the process for filling NTWC vacancies pursuant to the adopted by-laws. Select new members of the NTWC as needed to ensure the Council will adequately receive individual input from tribes nationally. The recipient will make the final decisions regarding the composition of the NTWC membership using criteria agreed upon by the NTWC and the EPA Project Officer. It is anticipated that the existing Council membership will continue to serve the length of their terms according to the current by-laws.
- c. Assist NTWC with planning meetings, and developing meeting agendas in consultation with the NTWC and EPA. Support two face-to-face NTWC-EPA meetings per year (one in the Spring in Washington, DC, and one in the Fall). Applicants should describe their proposed locations for the Fall meetings in their applications.
- d. Support NTWC travel by making travel arrangements, and provide funding for necessary travel-related expenses (e.g., airfare, hotel, and per-diem) for NTWC members for the biannual face-to-face NTWC/EPA meetings. Funds awarded under this announcement may also be used by the recipient to support NTWC member travel expenses for participation at meetings identified in the cooperative agreement workplan, including NTWC member representation at relevant conferences and meetings to conduct tribal outreach, identify and address high priority tribal interest areas and technical analysis, and seek tribal input on, or help to disseminate the results of studies in water related areas. NTWC travel to relevant conferences and meetings must be for the purpose of meeting the objectives of this project, and acquiring knowledge that will be disseminated back to the NTWC and more broadly to tribal water professionals. The recipient will decide which NTWC members receive travel assistance to specific relevant events (for examples of relevant events, see Section I.B, Project Element 2). Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend meetings and conferences. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the meetings and conferences. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.
- e. Provide technical support for periodic conference calls (with the help of an EPA contractor for conference call logistics) for joint NTWC and EPA discussions to

exchange and bring new information or tribal perspectives on issues related to ground, surface, and drinking water quality. In their applications, applicants should specify the proposed frequency of the calls and describe their approach to establishing the agenda for the calls. Although the successful applicant will consult with EPA's Project Officer on the agenda for the calls, the final decision on the agenda for the calls will be made by the recipient and the NTWC.

Project Element 2: Information Exchange

The successful applicant will assist the NTWC in promoting technical water-program focused information exchange and sharing of best management practices for addressing water quality and drinking water concerns to tribes and EPA. These efforts are intended to help create a broader understanding, among both tribal and non-tribal water professionals, and EPA, of the potential impacts of and solutions for existing and emerging water issues in Indian country. Information exchange may also promote educational opportunities for NTWC members. The components of this project element may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Facilitate NTWC involvement in relevant local and regional collaborative water protection efforts such as those covering the Great Lakes region, the Mississippi Basin and Gulf of Mexico, Puget Sound, the Everglades, and other Large Aquatic Ecosystems (See [EPA Learn About Water](#) for more information).
- b. Collaborate with other groups representing tribal interests in the federal/tribal co-regulator network including for example, the National Tribal Caucus and Regional tribal operations committees, to promote networking and information exchange and to communicate national tribal water priorities. Support individual members of the NTWCs' participation in tribal or EPA water program meetings and discussions to raise tribal issues, provide input and exchange information.
- c. Support NTWC members in bringing new information or perspectives on water resource protection practices to tribes through formal presentations, informal discussions, and training sessions, including remote training mechanisms such as webinars. Assist NTWC with identifying the need for research, studies, training, and demonstration projects.
- d. Support learning opportunities to increase NTWC member knowledge on CWA and SDWA-related topics such as water quality monitoring technologies and sustainable drinking water treatment systems, and stay current with emerging issues.
- e. Facilitate information exchange on water quality and drinking water topics with tribes and EPA through actions such as: (1) notifying tribes on high priority water issues and matters that may be appropriate for tribal consultation; (2) interacting directly with water professionals that have interests in tribal water resource protection issues at both the national and regional levels; (3) presenting specific water topics to a tribal audience to improve tribal understanding of water programs; (4) highlighting potential impacts of water issues in Indian country; (5) discussing/seeking input on tribal water studies; (6) providing water resource protection training; and (7) facilitating NTWC discussions with tribes on tribal compliance with the CWA and SDWA regulations governing water resources in a manner that is consistent with tribal sovereignty and tribal treaty rights.

- f. Help represent tribal perspectives on issues related to ground, surface, and drinking water quality.
- g. Provide technical analysis of water policy and regulatory actions.
- h. Seek non-consensus input from tribes and convey results of studies and best practices in Indian country.

Project Element 3: Outreach

The successful applicant will assist the NTWC to conduct outreach activities to benefit tribes on water resource protection and restoration topics. The components of this project element may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Determine the appropriate outreach, or delivery of information mechanisms, so that information can reach a broad tribal audience and facilitate the participation of interested tribes in EPA initiatives and actions. Examples include newsletters, information listserves, webinars, workshops, forums or meetings open to general tribal participants.
- b. Develop and maintain an updated website to foster communication where NTWC members and the public can obtain access to information about the NTWC, including research reports, studies, training course announcements, and the results of the NTWC meetings.
- c. Support the NTWC in outreach discussions with tribes, to obtain non-consensus tribal input on the development and implementation of national water policy initiatives, new regulations, strategic plans, or other identified priority actions identified by the NTWC that may impact tribes. Examples of identified priority actions could include water sustainability and climate change adaptation and mitigation plans.

Project Element 4: Studies

The successful applicant will conduct studies in support of, and in coordination with the NTWC that identify and analyze high priority, water-related issues and actions from tribal perspectives related to the SDWA and CWA. The components of this project element may include, but are not limited to:

- a. In coordination with the NTWC, develop and maintain a list of high priority, tribal water-related program focus areas, issues, and actions related to the SDWA and CWA. In their applications, applicants should describe the frequency of the updates to this list and how they intend to distribute it.
- b. Provide support to NTWC members by conducting research and studies to prepare for meetings. Assist the NTWC to define training or study needs, and solicit and obtain requested tribal technical assistance from EPA or other sources.
- c. Develop and disseminate studies on topics that are identified by the NTWC that are consistent with the CWA 104(b)(3) and SDWA 1442 authorities that would be of high benefit to tribes and/or help the NTWC prepare for meetings. In their applications, applicants may propose any subject areas that achieve the objectives described under this announcement.

Overall Vision for Success

As part of its application, the successful applicant is also expected to describe their overall vision for successfully accomplishing the project to support the NTWC. . Factors to consider may include, but are not limited to: (1) how the applicant will work with tribal representatives and provide appropriate techniques and formats to ensure tribal perspectives, and a diverse tribal council and views; (2) how the applicant will keep the NTWC, tribes and the EPA Project Officer informed throughout the project to meet the specific needs of the Council and EPA; and (3) how the applicant defines success for the project, and how the applicant will measure project success.

Transfer of Results

The applicant should also include a discussion of how the applicant will transfer results of the project, including for example effective strategies, and resources developed (such as webinars, and training materials), throughout Indian country and to other interested stakeholders.

Contractor Assistance for Logistical Support to the NTWC

For application planning and budgetary purposes, EPA plans to have a contractor assist with the general logistical activities necessary to support the NTWC. EPA will provide the services of the contractor as part of its support for the NTWC as a form of in-kind assistance. EPA anticipates the contractor to assist with logistical support to NTWC meetings and monthly conference calls, and other support. For example, the contractor will be available to provide expert support on:

- Serving as a meeting facilitator;
- Taking notes during meetings and disseminating approved notes from monthly calls involving NTWC;
- Developing proceedings from outreach meetings and face-to-face meetings with EPA;
- Setting up conference lines and notifying participants;
- Organizing and formatting agendas;
- Negotiating hotel, conference space and transportation rates;
- Updating list serves and e-mail addresses; and
- Broadly disseminating NTWC products.

Specific activities to be undertaken by the EPA contractor under EPA direction will be determined during the pre-award negotiation process with the selected recipient.

C. EPA'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The activities to be funded under this announcement are consistent with the Agency's Strategic Plan, Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters; Objective 2.1: Protect Human Health, and Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems. EPA's Strategic Plan is available at [EPA Strategic Plan](#).

All proposed activities must address the Strategic Plan priorities and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall protection and management of tribal water resource

programs.

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Expected environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or 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.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Increased outreach efforts and two-way dialogue among tribes, and between tribes and EPA.
- Number of tribes notified on NTWC activities, such as high priority issues and matters appropriate for tribal consultation regarding SWDA and CWA water programs.
- Number of tribes participating in intertribal communication tools and/or venues such as webinars, websites, conference calls, etc.
- Completion of information sharing activities involving the NTWC and tribes that improves the quality of interactions among tribes, and between tribes and EPA on tribal water program issues. Completion of studies to improve tribal knowledge and capacity to protect and restore water resources.
- Number of communication activities performed under the assistance agreement that increase opportunities for tribes to engage on water issues and increase knowledge and understanding of tribes (such as newsletters, webinars, electronic outreach, or participation in meetings/workshops/etc. open to general tribal participation).

Examples of anticipated environmental outcomes from the assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Increased participation and information exchange among tribes, and between tribes and EPA involved in various aspects of water programs.
- Improved understanding by tribal water managers/technicians of best practices and water protection and management strategies for tribes leading to increased compliance at tribally-operated facilities, enhanced tribal water protection programs or actions, and more overall effective protection of human health and the environment in Indian country and Alaska Native Villages.
- Increased number of tribes implementing water quality programs, leading to cleaner water.
- Increased tribal cooperation with state governments in watershed protection and monitoring efforts, based on increased knowledge and understanding of water programs and issues, and common goals for achieving clean water and protecting community health.

As part of the Project Narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the applicant's activities will link to outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA's discussion of environmental results in terms of outputs and outcomes can be found at:

[EPA's Policy for Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements.](#)

D. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for this announcement is CWA Section 104(b)(3) and SDWA Section 1442(c)(3). Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these assistance agreements to the following: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Section 1442(c)(3) of the SDWA authorizes EPA to make grants for research, technical assistance, and training involving the public health aspects of providing safe drinking water. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

The total amount of expected funding available under this announcement is approximately \$1,100,000, depending on Agency funding levels, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. EPA anticipates that one award will be made under this announcement. The anticipated project period for the award is five years. EPA anticipates that the award will be funded incrementally at \$220,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, available funding levels, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

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

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

B. TYPE OF FUNDING

It is anticipated that one cooperative agreement will be awarded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project work plan and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for the project selected may include:

1. Close and regular monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
2. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work including setting meeting agendas and determining the location of face to face meetings. The recipient, in

consultation with the NTWC and EPA, will make the final decisions on the meeting agendas. With the exception of the Spring biannual meetings in the Washington, DC area each year of the project period that EPA will co-sponsor, the recipient will determine the location of the meetings;

3. In accordance with the applicable regulations at 2 CFR 200 Subpart D (200.317 through 200.326) as appropriate, review of proposed procurements;
4. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); and
5. Review and comment on tasks/deliverables and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories, possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public or private non-profit institutions are eligible to apply. Individuals are not eligible to apply. For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

Non-profit organizations may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a non-profit organization in OMB Circular A-122, now at 2 CFR Part 230. Interstate agencies may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority, which establishes their status. An intertribal consortium is a partnership between two or more tribes that is authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance. (See 40 CFR 35.502). The intertribal consortium is eligible only if the consortium demonstrates that all of its members meet the eligibility requirements and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance in accordance with 40 CFR 35.504 at the time of application submission. An intertribal consortium must submit with its application to EPA adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the consortium by its members to apply for and receive the grant. (See 40 CFR 35.504).

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

No cost share or match is required.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements that, if not met by the time of application package submission, will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement at the time of application submission.
2. Applications must substantially comply with the application 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.C.2 with respect to the Project Narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.C.2, Project Narrative, establishes a 15-page, single-spaced Project Narrative page limit that does not include the cover page. If a double-spaced project narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 15 single-spaced (30 page double-spaced) page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed.
3. Applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://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 application 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 application is timely submitted.
4. Applications 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](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal/application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Felicia Wright via email at wright.felicia@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your or application not being reviewed.
5. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. REQUIREMENT TO SUBMIT THROUGH GRANTS.GOV AND LIMITED EXCEPTION PROCEDURES

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under this funding opportunity based on the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because of

limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), the applicant must contact 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 [Grants.gov](https://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, 2016, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2016). 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](https://www.grants.gov) for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2016 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2017, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2017.

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.

All applications must be prepared and include the information as described in Section IV.C. (Content of Application Package Submission).

B. GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete. 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.

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 [Grants.gov](https://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](https://www.grants.gov), [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov), and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through [Grants.gov](https://www.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 [Grants.gov](https://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 [Adobe Reader Compatibility Information on Grants.gov](https://www.adobe.com/reader/compatibility.html)

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Go to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OW-IO-16-01, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.424, 66.436) in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). To find the synopsis page, go to [Grants.gov](https://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. Note to offices: The funding opportunity number must begin with the EPA prefix.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than Friday, July 15th, 2016. 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.

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. EPA Grants.gov Lobbying Form – Certification Regarding Lobbying
5. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
6. EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre-award Compliance Review Report
7. Project Narrative - prepared as described in Section IV.C.2 of the announcement

Optional Documents:

8. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL), if applicable

9. Other Attachments Form – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate, if applicable
10. Other Attachments Form – Biographical Sketches-
11. Other Attachments Form – Letters of Support

Applications submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Felicia Wright at (202) 566-1886. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

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](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov). It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.** The [Grants.gov](https://www.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](https://www.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 [Grants.gov](https://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 Felicia Wright with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Felicia Wright at (202) 566-1886. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://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](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov), it is essential to call [Grants.gov](https://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](https://www.grants.gov) representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Felicia Wright at (202) 566-1886.
- b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to wright.felicia@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.
- c. [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to wright.felicia@epa.gov 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](https://www.grants.gov) and attach the entire application in PDF format.

C. CONTENT OF APPLICATION PACKAGE SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very carefully. A complete application package must include the following documents described below.

1. Application Materials

- a. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424 - Application for Federal Assistance.
Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and email in Block 5 of the SF 424. The organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included in 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.
- b. SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.
The total amount of federal funding requested for the five-year project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package (See instructions for document j, below). In Section BV, Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for non-federal cost-share/match, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (combined federal fund and non-federal cost-share/match).

c. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B). Complete the form. There are no attachments.

d. EPA Lobbying Form - Certification Regarding Lobbying. Complete the form. There are no attachments.

e. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54. Complete the form. Attach additional forms as needed.

f. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report. Complete the form. There are no attachments.

g. Project Narrative. **See Section IV.C.2** (Project Narrative) for details on specific information that must be included. When developing the Project Narrative, applicants should refer to Section I.B of the announcement which provides the project description.

h. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). Complete this form if your organization is involved in lobbying activities.

i. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if indirect costs are included in your project budget). Complete this form if indirect costs are included in the proposed project budget. You must submit a copy of your organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed project budget includes indirect costs.

j. Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel: Programmatic Capability and Past Performance. Submit a biographical sketch of each project manager for the proposed project. Provide the names, phone numbers, business address, and e-mail address, for proposed principal investigator(s) and key associates. Describe the qualifications, experience, and availability of these personnel to perform the work. Annotated resumes (not to exceed one page each) outlining education, work history, and knowledge/expertise of the individual as it relates to managing the proposed project, must be submitted for each major project manager, support staff member or other major participant. Full resumes may be included as an appendix to the main application package.

2. Project Narrative

NOTE: The Project Narrative must include sections A-C below. The Project Narrative is limited to no more than fifteen (15) typewritten single spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper) including the executive summary, but not including the cover page. Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the Project

Narrative. **Additional pages beyond the 15 page limit will not be considered.** If a double-spaced Project Narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 15 single-spaced (30 page double-spaced) page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed.

The application's Project Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the Project Narrative.

A. Cover Page (not included in 15 page limit) including:

- a. Name of applicant;
- b. Project title;
- c. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number); and
- d. Total project cost: specify the amount of federal funds requested and the total project cost.

B. Executive Summary (included in 15 page limit): Provide a brief summary (should not exceed one page) of the application. This should include a brief description of the proposed project and the anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes.

C. Work Plan (included in the 15 page limit): The work plan must address the following elements:

a. Support to National Tribal Water Council

Describe the technical approach you will use to provide support to the NTWC to enhance expertise, communication, and coordination among tribes, the NTWC, and EPA for water programs. The workplan should also describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project elements. Specifically, describe how you will accomplish the four project elements described in Section I.B. Project Description:

- i. How you will support the operation of the Council as a national forum and network for tribal water managers, and provide logistical support so that the Council may interact with each other, with tribes, and directly with EPA. If travel assistance is to be provided for NTWC members, describe the process for selecting attendees who may receive travel assistance;
- ii. How you will assist the NTWC to promote technical water program-focused information exchange and sharing of best management practices for addressing water quality and drinking water concerns to tribes and EPA;
- iii. How you will assist the NTWC to conduct outreach activities to benefit tribes on water resource protection and restoration topics; and
- iv. Ideas you have and how you will conduct studies in coordination with the NTWC that identify and analyze high priority, water-related issues and actions from tribal perspectives related to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and the Clean Water Act (CWA).

- b. Overall Vision for Success:** Describe your overall vision for successfully accomplishing the project to support the NTWC. Factors to consider may include but are not limited to: (1) how the applicant will work with tribal representatives and provide appropriate techniques and formats to ensure tribal perspectives, and a diverse tribal

council and views; (2) how the applicant will keep the NTWC, tribes and the EPA Project Officer informed throughout the project to meet the specific needs of the Council and EPA; and (3) how you define success and how you will measure success.

- c. Milestone Schedule:** Provide a projected milestone schedule that covers each year of the total five year project period. The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks and an approach for ensuring that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant.
- d. Detailed Budget Narrative:** Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task/component. This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF424A such as “other” and “contractual”.

 - i. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total cost. All subgrant funding should be located in the “other” cost category. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of costs for each project component/task as well as the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs. If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel costs for the applicant’s employees. The budget narrative for reimbursement to pay for travel costs of NTWC members to attend meetings should be placed in the “other” direct costs category.
- e. Transfer of Results:** Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the project throughout Indian country and to other interested stakeholders (see also Section I.B).
- f. Environmental Results and Measuring Progress:**

 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the objective of the project and the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2: Protecting America’s Waters; Objective 2.1: Protect Human Health, and Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems (see Section I.C. of the announcement).
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project, and describe an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement).
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - Describe the environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of the project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result of the accomplishment of the work plan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting

progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement).

g. Programmatic Capability/Specialized Experience:

- i. Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of your organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
- ii. Staff Expertise/Qualifications - Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their experience/expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2,080 hours per year/FTE). Describe prior experiences with interacting with tribal agencies responsible for environmental protection, particularly in relation to water programs. Include a description of experience: (1) working on human health and environmental issues related to water under the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act; (2) working with senior managers at EPA, preferably associated with water resource protection programs; and (3) demonstrated experience and ability to engage with tribal environmental professionals (preferably on water-related issues) such that the applicant has maintained relationships with tribes and demonstrates successful outcomes as a result of that work. If you choose to identify any partner organizations who will receive subawards or procurement contracts (including consultants) please refer to Section IV.F before doing so as EPA will not consider their qualifications unless you select them in compliance with applicable regulations and provisions. A biographical sketch must be submitted for each major project manager, support staff member, or other major project participant. Biographical sketches are not counted in the page limit. Full resumes may be included as an appendix to the Project Narrative and are not counted in the page limit.

h. Past Performance:

- a) Programmatic Past Performance - Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements) and:
 1. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements;
 2. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports; and
 3. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

NOTE: In evaluating an applicant's past performance, 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 and prior federal agency 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 reporting information, you must indicate this in the application in order to receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. Failure to provide any programmatic past performance or reporting information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see also Section V).

i. Quality Assurance/Quality Control: Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) (not included in the page limit) – If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) of this announcement for additional information).

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its Project Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be submitted by **11:59 PM EDT Friday, July 15th, 2016**. Late applications will not be considered for funding.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "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 the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the state has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at [Office of Management and Budget: Intergovernmental Review \(SPOC List\)](#).

F. 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 and contracts and subawards under grants 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.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible applications, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 total point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the application package.

30 points total	Criterion 1: Support to National Tribal Water Council Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality of their technical approach for how the applicant will accomplish the four project elements described in Section I.B. Project Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Support the operation of the Council as a national forum and network for tribal water managers, and provide logistical support so that the Council may interact with each other, with tribes, and directly with EPA; (10 points)b) Assist the NTWC to promote technical water program-focused information exchange and sharing of best management practices for addressing water quality and drinking water concerns to tribes and EPA; (10 points)c) Assist the NTWC to conduct outreach activities to benefit tribes on water resource protection and restoration topics; and (5 points)d) Conduct studies in coordination with the NTWC that identify and analyze high priority, water-related issues and actions from tribal perspectives related to the SDWA and the CWA. (5 points)
10 points total	Criterion 2: Overall Vision for Success Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which the applicant provides an overall vision for success of the project supporting the National Tribal Water Council, taking into account the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) How the applicant will work with tribal representatives and provide appropriate techniques and formats to ensure tribal perspectives, and a diverse tribal council and views. (4 points)b) How the applicant will keep the NTWC, tribes and the EPA Project Officer informed throughout the project to meet the specific needs of the Council and EPA. (3 points)c) How the applicant will measure the success of the project. (3 points)
15 points total	Criterion 3: Milestone Schedule, Detailed Budget, and Transfer of Results

	<p>Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the application addresses each of the following sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy and completeness of the milestone schedule, including timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks, and an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (7 points) b) Reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget narrative and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. (5 points) c) A description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the project throughout Indian country and to other interested stakeholders. (3 points)
10 points total	<p>Criterion 4: Environmental Results and Measuring Progress Applications will be evaluated based on each of the following sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Environmental Results: The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates the ability to identify and articulate anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. (5 points) b) Measuring Progress: The extent and quality to which the application demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outcomes and outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (5 points)
20 points total	<p>Criterion 5: Programmatic Capability/Specialized Experience Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering the applicant's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Organizational experience related to the proposed project and their infrastructure as it relates to the ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points) b) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project, including experience:

	<p>(1) working on human health and environmental issues, preferably related to water under the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act (5 points)</p> <p>(2) working with senior managers in EPA, preferably associated with water resource protection programs. (5 points)</p> <p>(3) Experience working with tribal governments and tribal representatives. Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates they have relevant experience working with tribes, (preferably on water-related issues), have maintained relationships with tribes, and had successful outcomes as a result of that work. (5 points)</p>
15 points total	<p>Criterion 6: Past Performance</p> <p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, taking into account their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size and scope to the proposed project within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements). (5 points) b) History of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size and scope performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. (5 points) c) Extent and quality to which the applicant adequately documented and/or reported on its progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (5 points) <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under a), b), and c) above, EPA 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). Applicants with no relevant or available past</p>

	<p>performance information or reporting history must indicate that in the application and will receive a neutral score for the factor (i.e., 2.5 points for item a), 2.5 points for item b), and 2.5 points for item c)).</p> <p>Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factor (i.e., 0 points for item a), 0 points for item b), and 0 points for item c)).</p>
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B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All applications received via [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Applications that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel(s) comprised of EPA staff will review eligible applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. and will develop a ranking list of the applications based on the scores received. The ranking list will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decision. In making the final funding decision, the Selection Official will consider the application score and may also take into account programmatic priorities.

C. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR APPLICANTS INCORPORATED INTO THE SOLICITATION:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance 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.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Following EPA's evaluation of the applications, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance, nor is it a guarantee that the award will be made. The official notification of an award will be made by Grants and Interagency Agreements Management Division.

Applicants are cautioned that only an 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 Award Official, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the cooperative agreement can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a cooperative agreement can take up to 90 days or longer.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable final work plan narrative is required to include:

1. Components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each work plan component;
3. Work plan commitments for each component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the work plan commitments.

B. 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 DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, 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.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for all assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 2 CFR 200 and 1500, as applicable. A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in the cooperative agreement will be included in the final assistance agreement.

D. REPORTING

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the work plan consistent with 2 CFR 200 and 1500, and 40 CFR Part 45, as appropriate.

Additionally, if travel assistance is provided to NTWC members, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating attendees benefited from the meetings.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "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 the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the state has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at [Office of Management and Budget: Intergovernmental Review \(SPOC List\)](#).

F. 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 [Dispute Resolution Procedures](#). Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

Note to Applicants: In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants or discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to written questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in Section VII as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting a proposal. In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making a final eligibility determination. Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below before **Friday, July 1st, 2016**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at: [Grant Programs for Tribes](#). EPA strongly recommends interested applicants refer to the FAQs webpage prior to submitting a question.

Agency Contact:

Felicia Wright

E-mail: wright.felicia@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements may apply to these grants (see 2 CFR 1500.11). QA/QC requirements apply to the collections of environmental data. Environmental data are any

measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Successful applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist successful applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the successful applicant may work with the EPA QA/QC staff for Agency Contact information for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

If water quality data is generated, either directly or by subaward, the successful applicant must ensure all water quality data is transmitted into the Agency's Storage and Retrieval (STORET) Data Warehouse annually or by project completion using either WQX or WQXweb in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan. Water quality data that are appropriate for STORET include physical, chemical, and biological sample results from water, sediment, and fish tissue. The data include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is the water data schema associated with the EPA, State and Tribal Exchange Network. Using the WQX schema partners map their database structure to the WQX/STORET structure. WQXweb is a web-based tool to convert data into the STORET format for smaller data generators that are not direct partners on the Exchange Network. More information about WQX, WQXweb, and the STORET Warehouse, including tutorials, can be found at [Storage and Retrieval and Water Quality Exchange](#).

B. DATA SHARING

All recipients of these assistance agreements may be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.