

**U.S. EPA INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS DIVISION (IED), REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**  
**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-OAR-ORIA-17-02**  
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=290725>

**Questions received from the public with answers provided by EPA.**  
(updated: February 3, 2017)

**Q1.** *Would child care centers be an appropriate environment for this RFA?*

**A1.** EPA encourages all potential applicants to read the RFA carefully and completely. The sections that pertain to eligible entities and scope of work are found in Section I.B. Scope of Work (p.3), Section I.C.2. Outputs, and 3. Outcomes (p.7), and Section III.A. Eligible Entities (p.11). Only a potentially eligible entity can assess the requirements of the RFA in its entirety in determining their organization's suitability as an applicant.

**Q2.** *For the \$200,000/year limit, does that include indirect costs, or are indirects (sic) in addition to this amount?*

**A2.** The \$200,000 amount is inclusive of all costs.

**Q3.** *Our interventions research is working in all these areas. We would like a clarification about the expectation of "achieving outcomes on a national scale"? Does that mean the project would need to demonstrate that it has actually increased in-home visiting programs on a national scale (for example)? Or, would the RFA scope include the development of further evidence-based recommendations to enhance the NAEPP guidelines and suggest strategies for national expansion?*

**A3:** Thank you for your interest in the RFA (EPA-OAR-ORIA-17-02).

Each applicant has the flexibility to determine whether their project has a national scope and if so, demonstrate the national impacts in their application. Examples are provided, however, they are not limited to these examples.

**Q4.** *Are any conference calls planned for applicants to ask questions?*

**A4:** At this time, no calls are planned. Questions are currently being answered via email.

**Q5:** *We would be working primarily on the reservations of many Tribes throughout USEPA Region 5 and needed to know whether or not your office would want formal resolutions from each of the participating Tribes. We have gone that route before for RFAs but have also gone the route of MOU/MOA and even just letters of support from participating Tribes. Any and all information regarding this issue would be greatly appreciated.*

**A5:** All requirements are outlined in the Request for Proposals. Organizations are encouraged to submit any information required in the RFA as well as any other documentation that the applicant believes is important.

**Q6:** *Where is can I find the application online?*

**A6:** Go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and follow the instructions for submitting an application. The direct link is: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=290725>

**Q7:** *When I try to send emails to the [Nationalindoorenvironmentsrfa2017@epa.gov](mailto:Nationalindoorenvironmentsrfa2017@epa.gov), they are getting bounced back with an error message.*

**A7:** This issue has been resolved. If any other errors occur, please send inquiries directly to

[Durkin.kim@epa.gov](mailto:Durkin.kim@epa.gov).

**Q8:** *Can individual apply?*

**A8:** **Individuals** are not eligible to apply.

**Q9:** *Our organization works toward reducing pollen levels in and around housing. Pollen is an "outdoor" pollutant, of course, but we find that often a good deal of it gets into houses (most pollen grains are small enough to pass easily through window screens), and triggers a host of health problems. My question: as this is an "indoor" issue, do you think there would be any point in us trying to fill out a grant application?*

**A9:** Thanks for your interest in the National Indoor Environments Program: Reducing Public Exposure to Indoor Pollutants Request for Applications (RFA). Please refer to the criteria in the RFA to determine if your project is in line with the issues/priorities/outcomes. Only a potentially eligible entity can assess the requirements of the RFA in its entirety in determining their organization's suitability as an applicant.

**Q10:** *Does my proposed project address the national impact requirement?*

**A10:** Thank you for your interest in the National Indoor Environments Program: Reducing Public Exposure to Indoor Pollutants Request for Applications (RFA). This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible entities for demonstration, training, outreach and/or education projects that seek to reduce exposure to indoor air contaminants. Projects must have a national-scale impact and must yield measurable environmental outcomes. Each applicant should assess the criteria in the RFA, including the criteria around national scope. The examples you provide are consistent with the examples provided in the RFA.

**Q11:** *Are letters of support required for this application?*

**A11:** Letters of support are not required.

**Q12:** *On leveraged funding, is a statement on the work plan of additional funds/resources or those from 3<sup>rd</sup> party sources enough or do we need letters from them?*

**A12:** For leveraged funds, please the information below. This information can be found on the bottom of page 12 of the RFA:

"While this form of leveraging should not be included in the budget, the grant work plan should include a statement indicating that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's proposal. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their proposals. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 CFR Part 200 as applicable."

Here are the review criteria that can be found on pages 19-20:

**"5. Leveraging:** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate that they will leverage additional funds/resources, beyond the grant funds awarded, to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how they will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength

of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds/resources will play to support the proposed project activities.” For leveraged funds, please the information below. This information can be found on the bottom of page 12:

“While this form of leveraging should not be included in the budget, the grant work plan should include a statement indicating that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's proposal. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their proposals. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 CFR Part 200 as applicable.”

Here are the review criteria that can be found on pages 19-20:

**“5. Leveraging:** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate that they will leverage additional funds/resources, beyond the grant funds awarded, to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how they will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds/resources will play to support the proposed project activities.”

**Q13:** *On form SF-424 question #3 “date received”, it is grayed out, do we need to answer it? What is date received? On form SF-424 question #10 “Name of Federal Agency”, it is grayed out, do we need to answer it? EPA? AND last, question 15 “descriptive title of applicant’s project”, do we come up with a title or use the one on the RFA?*

**A13:** For the 424 questions:

Applicants should enter the date they submit their application.

Name of federal agency is “Environmental Protection Agency.”

Description of applicant’s project would be the title of the RFA.

**Q14:** *I have a question regarding the National Indoor Environments Program grant. What exactly will it fund? We are looking to fund materials and remediation for a scale-up of a home-based intervention program for asthma. Materials include: mattress covers, cleaning supplies, and storage bins.*

**A14:** Thanks for your interest in the National Indoor Environments Program: Reducing Public Exposure to Indoor Pollutants Request for Applications (RFA). Below is information from page 17 of the RFA, but please refer to the criteria in the RFA to determine if your project is in line with the issues/priorities/outcomes. Only a potentially eligible entity can assess the requirements of the RFA in its entirety in determining their organization’s suitability as an applicant.

This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget found in the SF-424A. Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate agreement that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award.

a. Description of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task.

- b. Description of the applicant’s approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.
- c. Applicants **must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.** \*Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate agreement that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award.
- d. For applicants that provide a voluntary cost share/match, the budget narrative must clearly specify the amount of federal funding and the cost-share amount for each category of total project costs for each category. Include an explanation of how the voluntary match will be met. All matching funds are subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 CFR Part 200.

**Q15:** *It’s not completely clear whether non-Federally funded past performance will be considered in evaluating responses to section IV.C.2.c. on Programmatic Capability and Past Performance. Not considering contracts, we don’t have assistance agreements under Federal funding in the last 3 years. We do have a number of non-Federal grants we could mention to show ability to perform. Should we*

- a) *State “no relevant past performance information” and request the neutral score,*
- b) *Report on non-federal projects in this section*
- c) *Something else?*

**A15:** This evaluation criterion is only relative to federal grants. Non-federal grants do not necessarily have the same requirements as federal grants, which is why this criterion only covers federal grants. The applicant should still respond to this item in order to receive a neutral score; otherwise, they may receive a zero for this item. From page 17 (relevant items highlighted):

### **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

And from the evaluation criteria on page 19:

Note: In evaluating applicants under items I and II of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting

information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these sub-factors (items I and II above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

**Q16:** *If we apply for radon, asthma, and if we address multiple air quality contaminants, will our application be reviewed for the 3 priority areas as listed or will it be reviewed for one of them such as the multiple indoor air quality contaminants?*

**A16:** Here is information in the RFA relating to the multiple indoor contaminants priority area. Per the way the information is described in the RFA, applications addressing multiple indoor contaminants such as: radon, secondhand smoke, mold, irritant and allergenic asthma triggers, combustion by-products (e.g., carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and particles) and volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds (for more information, visit Page 5 and 6 of 28, [www.epa.gov/iaq](http://www.epa.gov/iaq)) would be included in the multiple indoor air contaminants priority area.

**Q17:** *Our team would like to apply for the grant. However, since we are a for-profit company, we planned to work on this with our partner in indoor analysis. We understand that the upper funding limit is \$200k. Could you tell us the percentage that the non-profit organization would be allowed to divert to us as the for-profit partner.*

**A17:** Thank you for your message. Technically there is not a percentage limit. Applicants need to follow the contracting clause located here <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses> and in 2 CFR Part 200 (in particular 200.319 through 200.323).

**Q18:** *For our proposal, we are partnering with 3-4 different organizations. The primary/lead on the project is a partnership that is pending its 501c3 approval from the IRS. (It has been already been approved as a state nonprofit corporation.) The federal certification, while pending, will be in place before the grant awards are made. Do you know if this will be an issue?*

**A18:** Applicants need to meet all of the eligibility requirements at the time that they submit their application (see pages 11 and 13 of the RFA). However, the definition of nonprofit does not include anything about obtaining 501(c)(3) approval from IRS. Applicants need to meet the following definition of nonprofit at the time that they submit their application:

#### **§200.70 Nonprofit organization.**

*Nonprofit organization* means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including IHEs, that:

- (a) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;
- (b) Is not organized primarily for profit; and
- (c) Uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

The link to 2 CFR Part 200 is here: [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7ce148a35a71972ae4bd23610b158c8a&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7ce148a35a71972ae4bd23610b158c8a&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl)

**Q19:** *Is it acceptable to be a lead on one proposal and a sub on another?*

**A19:** EPA does not have rules or policies that prohibit applicants from competing for funding as a recipient and being named by other organizations as a potential subrecipient in the same competition. We urge you, however, to consult with counsel to ensure that any collaboration between your organization and these other organizations regarding proposals is consistent with anti-trust laws. Additionally, we strongly recommend that your organization, as well as the other organizations that you may partner with, carefully review Solicitation Clause I V d. "Partnerships, Contractors and Subawards" before naming any organization, company, or individual as a partner who will receive EPA funds if the proposal is selected for an award.

**Q20:** *Is this Request for Applications (RFA) still open?*

**A20:** EPA will continue accepting applications in response to the Funding Opportunity (EPA-OAR-ORIA-17-02), until 4:00 p.m. EST on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the deadline for submitting applications through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). If further information becomes available, EPA will post that information to <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/cooperative-agreement-funding-indoor-air-quality>, as promptly as possible.

**Q21:** *Are salaries subject to the NIH salary cap?*

**A21:** There is not a specific provision in the RFA that subjects salaries to the NIH salary cap. However, costs do need to comply with the cost principles of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E, which requires costs to be appropriate, applicable, and allocable. Subpart E is available here: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=9a5fa5424de557359c35643c3b594a43&mc=true&n=sp2.1.200.e&r=SUBPART&ty=HTML> . Also, we encourage applicants to review the evaluation criterion "4. Budget" on page 19 of the RFA.

**Q22:** *If we are proposing a 3year project period, should we just include a detailed budget for Year1 (but reflect the total requested funds in SF424/a), Or should we include a detailed budget for all 3 years, or just include only the total amounts for all 3 years combined (as described in the AppB Budget Sample)?*

**A22:** The 424A is a mix, depending on the section. Sections A, B, and C are for the total amounts of the application; Section D is for the first year; and Section E is a breakout for each year. The budget detail is a more detailed presentation of the 424A, so they should account for the total funding. Applicants should look at evaluation criterion 4. Budget on page 19 and determine whether or not they are providing enough information in their budget detail and 424A for EPA to evaluate their proposed budget.

**Q23:** *Does the indirect cost rate agreement count toward the 13 page total for the Narrative Proposal? Page 16 of 28 in the RFA does not specify if this item counts within the 13 pages.*

**A23:** Yes, the indirect cost rate agreement is part of the 13-page limit (it's referenced on pages 16-18 in the narrative section and budget detail section of the RFP; both the narrative and budget detail count towards the page limit).

**Q24:** *My organization read the RFA and did not see any indirect cost rate cap. Is there one? Or, do we use our federally negotiated indirect cost rate?*

**A24:** Applicants need to use their "current indirect cost rate agreement that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award." The details of this are under "3. Detailed Budget Narrative (See Appendix B, Budget Sample)" on pages 17-18.

**Q25:** *Do reference letters count towards the 13-page total?*

**A25:** No, the reference letters do not count towards the 13-page total. They are considered supplemental materials.