

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

TITLE: Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Applications for Support for Development and Implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications

RFA NUMBER: EPA-R3-CBP-19-02

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 66.466

IMPORTANT DATES

02/04/2019 Issuance of Request for Applications
03/20/2019 Application Submission Deadline (See Section IV for more information)
05/03/2019 Approximate date for EPA to notify applicants of results
06/03/2019 Approximate date for applicant to submit federal cooperative agreement
07/08/2019 Approximate date of award

EPA will consider all applications that are submitted via Grants.gov on or before 11:59 pm ET on **March 20, 2019**. Any application submitted after the due date and time will not be considered for funding. No applications will be accepted by facsimile or e-mail. EPA will only accept applications submitted via Grants.gov, except in limited circumstances where applicants have no or very limited Internet access (see Section IV).

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) is announcing a Request for Applications (RFA) for applicants to provide the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partners with applications for providing technical, financial, and programmatic assistance to reduce the necessary pollutant loads due to Conowingo Dam infill. This technical support includes the (1) development and implementation of Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and two-year milestones, including an approach to identify the most cost-effective, efficient, and targeted nutrient and sediment reduction actions to address increased pollutant loadings due to the Conowingo Dam infill; (2) development of a multijurisdictional approach to financing by delivering a framework for a new financing system and associated implementation plan; and (3) development of a system for tracking, verifying, and reporting the implementation of practices identified in the Conowingo WIP and two-year milestones providing nutrient and sediment pollutant load reductions.

CBP partners include federal agencies, seven watershed jurisdictions, and many non-federal organizations; however, work funded under this RFA will support the seven watershed jurisdictions and other non-federal partners. The seven watershed jurisdictions are Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

FUNDING/AWARDS: This RFA will cover the project period up to and including six years from an expected start date of **July 8, 2019**. EPA CBPO plans to award from one to three cooperative agreements under this RFA.

Applicants may apply for any or all of the three activities. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$1,800,000 to \$8,100,000 with an estimated \$20,000 to \$1,000,000 available for the first year and each additional year per activity. However, it should be noted that these ranges are a broad representation of all the activities combined, and specific funding ranges may vary by activity as noted in this RFA. Therefore, applicants should refer to each specific activity for the actual funding amount when developing its applications. There is no guarantee of funding throughout the six-year period or beyond.

Applicants may apply for more than one of the activities described in Section I.B but must submit one application per activity. Each application must be separately submitted. Each application must address only one activity. If an applicant submits more than one application per activity, EPA will contact the applicant to determine which one to review.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

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I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

1. About the Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary. A resource of extraordinary productivity, it is worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration. Authorized by Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1267, the Chesapeake Bay Program is responsible for supporting the Chesapeake Executive Council through many actions, including the coordination of federal, state, and local efforts to restore and protect living resources and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Section 117 also authorizes EPA to provide assistance grants to support the goals of the program.

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

government; and participating citizen, local government, and scientific and technical advisory groups.

The CBP partnership is guided at the direction of the Chesapeake Executive Council (Executive Council). The Executive Council sets the policy direction for the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and uses its leadership to rally public support for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection. The Executive Council also signs directives, agreements, and amendments that set goals and guide policy for Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection.

The Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) acts as the senior policy advisor to the Executive Council, accepting items for Executive Council consideration and approval and setting agendas for Executive Council meetings. The PSC also provides policy and program direction to the Management Board.

The Management Board provides strategic planning, priority setting, and operational guidance through implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, accountable implementation strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program. It directs and coordinates all of the Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) and their respective workgroups.

The membership of the GITs and the Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting Team include federal and non-federal experts from throughout the watershed. Thus, academic experts, advocacy organizations, and others become active members of the broad Chesapeake Bay and watershed restoration and protection partnership.

Pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 117(b)(2), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (b)(2), the Chesapeake Bay Program Office is the office within EPA charged with providing support to the Executive Council in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay Program Office and Chesapeake Bay Program, both mentioned above, are two distinct entities.

2. 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Executive Order 13508

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

The cooperative agreement to be awarded under this announcement will help support the water quality goal in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and further the following principles as stated in the Agreement: operate with transparency in program decisions, policies, actions and reporting to strengthen public confidence in our efforts, adaptively manage at all levels of the partnership to foster continuous improvement, and engage citizens to increase the number and diversity of people who support and carry out the conservation, protection and restoration activities necessary to achieve the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

3. *The Chesapeake Bay TMDL, WIPs, and the Midpoint Assessment*

The EPA has established the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), a historic and comprehensive “pollution diet” to facilitate implementation of actions to restore clean water to the Chesapeake Bay and the watershed’s streams, creeks and rivers.

The Chesapeake Bay TMDL – the largest ever developed by EPA – identifies the levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment across Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia that are necessary to meet applicable state water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay, its tidal tributaries and embayments. These pollutant limits were further divided by each of the seven Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions and major river basins based on state-of-the-art modeling tools, extensive monitoring data, peer-reviewed science and close interaction with jurisdictional partners.

Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) are plans for how each of the Bay jurisdictions, in partnership with federal and local governments, will achieve their respective Chesapeake Bay TMDL allocations and planning targets. The Phase I WIPs were developed in 2010 by the jurisdictions to inform the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL wasteload and load allocations. The Phase II WIPs were developed in 2012 by the jurisdictions to meet nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment planning targets based on updated information generated through the Partnership’s Phase 5.3.2 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model. The goal of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and supporting jurisdictional WIP process is to implement by 2025 all nutrient and sediment pollutant load reduction practices needed to fully restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal rivers.

Through the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Midpoint Assessment, the CBP partnership has recently updated and reviewed the latest science, data, models, and decision support tools to be used in estimating progress in nutrient and sediment pollutant load reductions. Phase III WIPs will be developed by jurisdictions based on the results of the Midpoint Assessment, the Phase III WIP planning targets, and new information provided by the Phase 6 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model and related updates of the Chesapeake Bay Airshed Models and the Chesapeake Water Quality and Sediment Transport Model. The Phase III WIPs will provide information on actions the seven watershed jurisdictions intend to implement between 2018 and 2025 to meet their respective Chesapeake Bay TMDL goals.

4. *Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership’s Environmental Models*

Models of the Chesapeake Bay’s airshed, watershed, estuary, and living resources have been developed by the partners and linked together over the past 30 years. The CBP partnership’s

suite of models assists in understanding the important processes affecting the health of the watershed and the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. These modeling tools provide the CBP partners with an understanding of the effect of various control strategies on pollutant levels and the level of nutrient and sediment load reductions needed to restore the Chesapeake Bay and achieve the applicable water quality standards for dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-*a*, underwater bay grasses and water clarity. By quantifying the management actions necessary to restore Chesapeake Bay habitats and the living resources dependent on those habitats, these integrated CBP partnership models provide guidance to environmental managers and citizens on where the most cost-effective reductions can be made so that controls are equitable and broadly supported.

Development and application of the next generation of Chesapeake Bay models will require an unprecedented level of direct involvement of a wide array of non-federal CBP partners and stakeholders in each step of the planning, development, calibration, verification, management application, and continued refinement/enhancement. Given that Bay restoration decision-making also occurs at a local scale, the next generation of the CBP partnership's Chesapeake Bay models must reflect these shifts in scale. These models must be developed for direct application by state and local jurisdictional partners, academic partners, and stakeholders alike, feeding directly into their respective and unique decision-making processes and supporting adaptive management at all scales.

Through the application of airshed, watershed, estuarine, and living resource modeling activities, the CBP partnership's state and local jurisdictional partners gain access to information that is used directly in decision-making for Chesapeake Bay environmental restoration efforts. Chesapeake Bay environmental models are developed, calibrated, verified, and applied through an expanding cooperative network of state, federal, regional and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutional partners. These partnership models help set the pace and direction of Chesapeake Bay restoration by providing information on water quality and biological resource responses to different management actions. One of the key modeling tools in this effort is the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST), which is a web-based tool that provides estimates of the nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment load reductions achieved by different combinations of BMPs in a particular geographical area. CAST also includes information on the cost of implementing various BMPs so that users can select the most cost-effective practices to reduce pollutant loads. See <https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/About> for more information.

5. Loss of Trapping Capacity of Conowingo Dam

The CBP partnership, building from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lower Susquehanna River Watershed Assessment study¹, has assessed the loss of trapping capacity of three dams and reservoirs on the lower Susquehanna River, especially the Conowingo Dam and reservoir. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) studies have shown the Conowingo Dam and reservoir are now in a state of "dynamic equilibrium," indicating the Conowingo reservoir is at near-full capacity². As a result, more sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus are now entering the Chesapeake

¹ The Susquehanna River Watershed Assessment study can be accessed here:
<http://dnr.maryland.gov/waters/bay/Pages/LSRWA/Final-Report.aspx>

² A recording of the Conowingo infill webinar can be viewed using the following link:
<http://epawebconferencing.acms.com/p29j5g7he49/>

Bay than were estimated when the Chesapeake Bay TMDL was established in 2010. The CBP partnership estimates that, after fully implementing the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and Phase I/II WIPs, an additional reduction of approximately 6 million pounds of nitrogen and 0.26 million pounds of phosphorus is needed to mitigate the water quality impacts of Conowingo Reservoir infill³. This additional reduction must be addressed to attain applicable state water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay.

Recognizing that addressing the loss of trapping capacity as a result of the Conowingo Dam infill is an important issue for all CBP partnership members, the PSC agreed to develop and implement a separate and collaborative Conowingo WIP that will provide details on how to reduce adverse water quality impacts to the Chesapeake Bay resulting from Conowingo Dam infill, as well as a timeline at which those reductions can be achieved. The PSC also decided that separate Conowingo planning targets will be set, representing the total pollutant load reductions needed as a result of the Conowingo Dam infill, which all Bay watershed jurisdictions would work collaboratively to achieve⁴. To assist in this effort, the PSC established the Conowingo WIP Steering Committee (the “Steering Committee”), which is composed of a representative from each Bay watershed jurisdiction and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. This Steering Committee is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of the Conowingo WIP, with oversight and direction from the PSC.

6. EPA’s Roles

While EPA does not serve on the Steering Committee, EPA, in its regular oversight role of the Bay TMDL and WIPs, will evaluate the Conowingo WIP and future two-year milestones to determine if the programmatic and numeric commitments achieve the Conowingo planning targets. Separately, in its role as administrator of the cooperative agreement(s) and with input from the Conowingo WIP Steering Committee and the PSC, EPA will evaluate the adequacy of any deliverables resulting from the cooperative agreement(s) to determine if the criteria set forth in the cooperative agreement(s) are met.

B. Scope of Work

This RFA is soliciting cost-effective applications from eligible applicants (see Section III, Eligibility Information, below) to provide technical and financial analysis and programmatic evaluation support to non-federal agencies and organizations that are members of the CBP partnership. While the CBP partnership is composed of federal and non-federal agencies and organizations, the activities funded under this RFA shall only support the non-federal partners. The recipient(s) of the cooperative agreements(s) awarded under this RFA will work directly with federal agencies, but the nature and principal purpose of that work will result only in direct benefit to the non-federal agencies, organizations, partners, and the general public. EPA will

³ Presentation to the Chesapeake Bay Program’s Principals’ Staff Committee at their December 19-20, 2017 meeting accessible using the following link:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/principals_staff_committee_meeting_december_2017.

⁴ See the presentations and the summary of decisions from the Chesapeake Bay Program Principals’ Staff Committee’s March 2, 2018 meeting accessible using the following link:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/principals_staff_committee_meeting_march_2018.

provide programmatic direction to the cooperative agreement recipient on behalf of the CBP partnership's PSC and its Conowingo WIP Steering Committee.

The U.S. EPA CBPO plans to award from one to three cooperative agreements under this RFA to an organization or organizations oriented towards providing highly specialized scientific, technical, and programmatic support and expertise in the development and implementation of the Conowingo WIP and the development of a comprehensive financing, investment, and funding strategy to the Conowingo WIP Steering Committee. The selected organization or organizations shall provide technical, financial, and programmatic assistance to reduce the necessary pollutant loads due to Conowingo Dam infill. This includes the following three overarching activities:

- Developing and implementing the Conowingo WIP and two-year milestones, include targeting implementation of cost-effective and efficient pollutant reduction practices and technologies to achieve the Conowingo planning targets⁵, working directly with federal, state, regional, and local governmental and non-governmental implementation efforts in (but not limited to) the most effective basins⁶;
- Developing, building, and implementing a financing strategy and associated implementation plan, which may include funding for BMP installation and innovative approaches for raising, allocating, and disbursing funds; and
- Tracking, verifying, and reporting the implementation of practices providing nutrient and sediment pollutant load reductions.

The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$1,800,000 to \$8,100,000 with an estimated \$20,000 to \$1,000,000 available for the first year and each additional year per activity. EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year(s), as funds may be limited based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, contributions from other state and federal agencies, partners, and organizations, and other applicable considerations.

If your organization has an interest in this project, has the skills to accomplish the activities listed below, and is eligible to receive a federal assistance agreement as described in Section III of this announcement, we encourage you to submit an application. Each eligible application will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section V. The activities are multi-year projects, so the application should have a work plan, budget, and budget narrative for the first and all subsequent years.

For an application to be considered eligible for funding, project-related work included in the application must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of

⁵ The Chesapeake Bay Program partnership estimates that, after fully implementing the Bay TMDL and Phase I/Phase II WIPs, an additional reduction of 6 million pounds of nitrogen and 0.26 million pounds of phosphorus is needed to mitigate the water quality impacts of Conowingo Reservoir infill.

⁶ Relative effectiveness accounts for the role of geography on nitrogen and phosphorus load changes and in, turn, Bay water quality.

Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia. The activities identified below are covered under this announcement.

Each application for each activity must address each component identified under that activity. A separate application must be submitted for each activity the applicant is applying for.

Activity 1: Facilitate Development and Implementation of the Conowingo WIP and Associated Two-year Milestones
Estimated Funding: \$50,000 to 250,000 per year

Providing Overall Assistance to the CBP Partnership's Conowingo WIP Steering Committee

The CBP partnership's PSC has convened a Steering Committee responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of the Conowingo WIP to reduce the nutrient and sediment pollutant loadings as a result of the Conowingo Dam infill. The Steering Committee seeks facilitation and programmatic, administrative, and technical assistance in the development and implementation of the Conowingo WIP. This support includes: (1) convening regular meetings of the Steering Committee; (2) documenting and disseminating key findings, actions, and decisions to the Steering Committee and larger CBP partnership; (3) developing a best management practices input deck which reflects the list of practices that, when run through the suite of the CBP partnership's modeling tools, will meet the Conowingo planning targets; (4) running input decks through CAST; (5) finalizing the Conowingo WIP; and (6) implementing the commitments and strategies reflected in the final Conowingo WIP, working with the Bay jurisdictions, where appropriate. Year 1 should focus on leading the development and finalization of the Conowingo WIP and 2020-2021 milestones, including a timeline of when the actions and commitments reflected in the Conowingo WIP will be accomplished. Years 2-6 should be focused on implementation of the Conowingo WIP.

Developing Two-year Milestones for the Conowingo WIP

The Bay watershed jurisdictions are responsible for developing and submitting to EPA two-year milestones that commit to short-term programmatic and implementation actions to meet each jurisdiction's 2025 water quality goals as reflected in their respective WIPs. The cooperative agreement recipient, working with the Steering Committee, shall be responsible for the development and submission of two-year milestones to EPA in accordance with the schedule established as part of the Conowingo WIP. The cooperative agreement recipient shall also be responsible for calculating the estimated cost to fully implement the actions and commitments reflected in each two-year milestone submission and facilitating the review and comment process of each two-year milestone submission with the CBP partnership and other interested parties as defined. As part of its regular oversight role, EPA will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of each two-year milestone submission. Year 1 should focus on the development of programmatic and implementation milestones to cover the 2020-2021-time period, to be submitted to EPA in December 2019. Years 2-6 should focus on development and implementation of future two-year milestones consistent with the schedule to implement the Conowingo WIP and consistent with the schedule for the Bay jurisdictions' milestones submissions.

Targeting Effective Practices to Reduce Pollutant Loadings

This work shall include the development of strategies and approaches to select and implement preferred pollutant reduction practices and other innovative implementation projects with consideration of cost-effectiveness and geographic location (i.e., where implementing practices in a particular geographic region would be more effective at reducing pollutant loads).

Reductions shall come from existing CBP partnership-approved BMPs. Methods developed for the geographic targeting of BMP locations shall be consistent with CBP partnership-approved models and watershed loading rates.

Establishing a Timeline for Achieving the CBP Partnership's Conowingo WIP

It is the expectation for the Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions to have practices and controls in place by 2025 that would achieve applicable water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay. The 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL assumed that the Conowingo Dam's current state of dynamic equilibrium would not be reached for many years to come; as a result, the needed increased effort to address this was not factored into the Bay watershed jurisdictions' Bay TMDL allocations. The cooperative agreement recipient, in coordination with the Steering Committee, shall develop and propose a timeline for achieving the pollutant loading reductions and implementation commitments and goals in the Conowingo WIP. This timeline should provide a range of alternative scenarios for having practices in place to achieve the needed Conowingo WIP load reductions by 2025 and other timeframes (e.g., 2030, 2035, etc.) based on projected funding and resource availability and expected implementation progress/achievability. This timeline shall also include a schedule for the development and implementation of two-year milestones to implement the Conowingo WIP. The timeline, including the range of alternative scenarios, will be submitted by the Steering Committee to the PSC for their review and action, as appropriate.

Conducting Watershed-wide Stakeholder Outreach

Local and federal partners' involvement and participation in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and WIP implementation process has been a critical factor in achieving water quality goals given that much of the programmatic and management actions are carried out at a local level. The Steering Committee seeks assistance with conducting local and federal partners' review and engagement with the development and implementation of the Conowingo WIP and the development and implementation of two-year milestones. Year 1 should focus on soliciting, compiling, and summarizing public feedback on the draft Conowingo WIP and revising the draft Conowingo WIP, as appropriate, in consultation with the Steering Committee prior to its finalization in accordance with the CBP partnership agreed-upon schedule⁷. The Conowingo WIP should include a local and federal engagement strategy that clearly outlines the role local and federal partners may assume in implementing the actions and commitments reflected in the Conowingo WIP. The cooperative agreement recipient will identify what actions will be taken to ensure that local and federal partners understand when engagement is being sought for the Conowingo WIP versus a jurisdictional WIP. Years 2-6 should focus on soliciting, compiling, and summarizing local and federal partners' involvement and feedback in the development of future two-year milestones to support implementation of the Conowingo WIP as well as continuously supporting, tracking, and verifying implementation of the Conowingo WIP's local and federal engagement

⁷ See the presentations and the summary of decisions from the Chesapeake Bay Program Principals' Staff Committee's March 2, 2018 meeting accessible using the following link:
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/principals_staff_committee_meeting_march_2018.

strategy. This may entail scheduling meetings and developing and disseminating outreach materials to communicate opportunities and expectations for local and federal partners' involvement in implementing the Conowingo WIP and its two-year milestones.

Activity 2: Develop and Propose a Comprehensive Conowingo WIP Financing Strategy and Associated Implementation Plan: \$230,000 to \$1,000,000 per year

Develop, Propose, and Implement Conowingo Finance Strategy

The Conowingo WIP effort will necessitate the development of a comprehensive financing, investment, and funding strategy. Success may require the identification and potential development of new institutional structures, programs, and policies that will incentivize WIP implementation and fund BMP installation across all sectors: public, private, and nonprofit. The very scope of the Conowingo issue may require a multijurisdictional approach to financing, which may include innovative approaches for raising, allocating and disbursing funds. This RFA is intended to seek applications for the development of a financing strategy and associated implementation plan, including timelines and milestones. While financing considerations will be addressed in the Conowingo WIP, the financing strategy will be developed after the finalization of the Conowingo WIP. The financing plan, when accepted by the Conowingo WIP Steering Committee and the PSC, will then be implemented under the agreed-upon timeline.

The cooperative agreement recipient shall, in consultation with the Steering Committee, identify, assemble, and facilitate participation of expert financial, legal, and policy organizations to develop and propose a financing strategy to support finance, investment, and local economic development and related issues, including funding BMP installation. Such structures may provide the foundation for an independent regional finance organization, which could serve as the authority in leveraging, receiving, managing, and disbursing public, non-profit, and private funds for Conowingo-related water quality improvements. This regional authority, if established, may be tasked with funding the implementation of the Conowingo WIP. Any proposed work under the financing strategy will be carried out in consultation with the Steering Committee and the PSC.

Identification of the Necessary Financing Approaches

The Steering Committee is seeking applications on identifying and potentially establishing approaches to: 1) identify potential sources of funds and incentivize investment in Conowingo WIP activities; and 2) receive, manage, and/or administer public, private, and nonprofit funds.

Assessment of Legal Authorities, Restrictions, and Processes Necessary to Propose a Multijurisdictional and Multi-Sector Finance and Investment System

The potential creation of a new finance and investment institution, which may include in its scope private, public and nonprofit funds, requires a thorough understanding of the legal requirements for the creation of such an institution. The cooperative agreement recipient for this Activity shall, in consultation with the Steering Committee, conduct an assessment to determine whether a new finance and investment framework should be established, which may include recommendations for a market-based trading and financing system, and the potential barriers and opportunities for doing so.

Link Economic Development to Restoration Finance

Funding restoration activities to implement the Conowingo WIP also may result in economic development. To that end, the Steering Committee seeks applications for developing an investment strategy that advances both water quality restoration and economic development, including actionable steps and an implementation timeline. Development of that investment strategy will require a thorough understanding of the processes and mechanisms necessary and available for linking investment and financing to long-term economic growth and development.

Activity 3: Tracking, Verifying, and Reporting Implementation of Conowingo WIP and Two-year Milestones: Estimated Funding: \$20,000 to 100,000 per year

Tracking, Verifying, and Reporting Progress on Conowingo WIP and Two-year Milestone Implementation

The cooperative agreement recipient shall be responsible for tracking, verifying, and reporting all nutrient and sediment pollutant load reducing practices that are implemented as a result of the Conowingo WIP and two-year milestones to the EPA CBPO by December 1 of each year, using CBP partnership-approved protocols. This shall include full documentation of the procedures that were followed in tracking, verifying, and reporting implementation on an annual basis and ensuring that progress is being attributed to the Conowingo WIP and/or its two-year milestones.

This element shall include a review of existing systems to evaluate their adequacy for tracking, verification, and reporting the practices implemented as a result of the Conowingo WIP and two-year milestones. It may be necessary to propose updates to existing tracking, verification and reporting systems to reflect new science, data, funding, and implementation progress, or to develop new systems. It also may be necessary to propose updates to the Conowingo WIP and two-year milestones.

The cooperative agreement recipient shall work in collaboration with the seven Bay watershed jurisdictions to understand and avoid overlap with other work being done by the jurisdictions in their respective Phase III WIPs for nutrient and sediment reductions. This collaborative work shall ensure that implementation is not double-counted in the tracking, verification, and reporting systems.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,” EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency’s Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements, accessible at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>).

1. Linkage to EPA’s Strategic Plan

The overall objective of this competition is to provide technical, programmatic, and administrative support for the CBP partnership in support of the most cost-effective, efficient,

and targeted pollutant load reduction and other implementation actions toward reaching the goals and outcomes of the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* under Section 117(d)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 1: Core Mission and Objective 1.2: Provide for Clean and Safe Water Goal of the EPA Strategic Plan. All applications must be for projects that support the goals and objectives identified above.

[EPA Order 5700.7A1](#) also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. Applicants must 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 priorities described above.

2. Outputs

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

- Draft and final Conowingo WIPs that will articulate the programmatic, implementation, and numeric commitments to achieve the necessary load reductions due to Conowingo Dam infill. (Activity 1)
- Documentation of approaches and strategies to select and implement best management practices and other implementation projects in targeted geographic locations resulting in the most cost-effective and efficient pollutant load reduction results. (Activity 1)
- Develop and implement two-year milestones that provide short-term programmatic and implementation commitments and actions to achieve the pollutant loading reduction goals in the CBP partnership's Conowingo WIP. (Activity 1)
- Develop and implement the Conowingo finance system and plan to leverage, receive, manage, and disburse public, nonprofit and private funds to implement the Conowingo WIP. (Activity 2)
- Identify the necessary institutional and financial structures for development of a Conowingo finance system and plan. (Activity 2)
- Assess the legal authorities and processes necessary to establish a multi-jurisdictional and multi-sector finance and investment system, as well as the potential barriers and opportunities for development of such a system. (Activity 2)
- Develop an investment strategy that advances both water quality restoration and economic development, including actionable steps and an implementation timeline. (Activity 2)
- Develop and implement effective BMP tracking, verification and reporting tools and systems to ensure full accountability of progress in the implementation of the Conowingo WIP and its two-year milestones. (Activity 3)

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

3. Outcomes

The term “outcome” means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Example outcomes under this application could include the following:

- Reduction of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment loads to the Chesapeake Bay. (Activity 1)
- Implementation of the Conowingo WIP and two-year milestones using BMP installation and implementation considering cost-effectiveness and geographic location. (Activity 1)
- Increasing the amount of funds available for implementing the Conowingo WIP and two-year milestones. (Activity 2)
- Developing an innovative multi-jurisdictional approach for raising, allocating, and disbursing funds. (Activity 2)
- Ensuring and documenting that practices implemented for the Conowingo WIP and two-year milestones are not double-counted with practices implemented for Bay jurisdiction WIPs and two-year milestones, by enabling those Conowingo practices to be verified, tracked, and reported accurately. (Activity 3)

D. Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

The grant made as a result of this announcement is authorized under the Clean Water Act Section 117(d), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d). Under Clean Water Act Section 117(d) (1), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d)(1), EPA has the authority to issue grants and cooperative agreements for the purposes of protecting and restoring the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. This project is subject to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 200) and EPA-specific provisions of the Uniform Grants Guidance (2 C.F.R. Part 1500).

II: AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

The U.S. EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office plans to award one to three cooperative agreements under this RFA. The total estimated funding for six years is approximately \$1,800,000 to \$8,100,000 with an estimated \$20,000 to \$1,000,000 available for the first year and each additional year per activity. However, it should be noted that these ranges are a broad representation of all the activities combined and specific funding ranges vary by activity as noted in the RFA. Therefore, applicants should refer to each specific activity for the actual funding amount when developing their applications.

EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award under this announcement, or less than the estimated funding amounts above. Funding for each activity depends on funding availability, satisfactory performance, Agency priorities, and other applicable considerations. EPA makes no commitment of annual funding amounts for any fiscal year(s), as funds may be limited based on these applicable considerations.

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

B. Award Type

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

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

C. Partial Funding

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 a project, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice the applicant 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.

D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreement is six years, with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment of funding can be made beyond the first year. The expected start date for the award resulting from this RFA is **July 8, 2019**.

E. Pre-Award Costs

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

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

III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

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

B. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

Pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 117(d)(2)(A), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267(d)(2)(A), the agency shall determine the cost-share requirements for awards. The CFDA Number 66.466 states that assistance agreement applicants must commit to a cost-share ranging from five to 50 percent of eligible project costs as determined at the sole discretion of EPA. For this RFA, EPA has determined that an applicant must provide a minimum of five percent of the total cost of the project as the non-federal cost-share.

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

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Only applications from eligible entities (see Section III.A above) that meet the following threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the criteria in Section V.B. Applicants must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible

for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified in writing within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. 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 with respect to the project narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
2. In addition, initial 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.
3. 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 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 James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov (see Section VII, Agency Contact) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application(s) not being reviewed.
4. The project funded under this announcement must be linked to the strategic goal outlined in Section I.C.1.
5. For applications to be considered eligible for funding, substantive project-related work included in the application must take place within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia.
6. Applications must show how they will meet the five percent cost-share requirement of Section III.B.
7. Applications requesting more than the maximum funding amount listed in the range for the applicable activity will be rejected.
8. Applicants may apply for more than one of the activities described in Section I.B but can submit only one application per activity. Each application must be separately submitted. Each application must address only one activity. If an applicant submits more than one application per activity, EPA will contact the applicant to determine which one to review.
9. Applicants must address each component under the activity listed in Section IB for which they apply.

10. 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. How to Obtain an Application Package

Applicants can download individual grant application forms from the application package associated with this opportunity on Grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

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

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

1. **Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 8 of SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or visiting their website at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.
2. **SF-424A, Budget Information** – Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown in Section A on Line 5(e) and on Line 6.k of Column (1) of Section B while recipient's total cost-share should be shown in Section A on Line 5(f) and Line 6.k of Column (2) of Section B. The amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
3. **SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs**
4. **EPA Form 4700-4, Preaward Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance**
5. **EPA Key Contacts Form**

6. **Project Narrative Attachment Form** – The format for the project narrative and the budget narrative are contained in Appendix A of this announcement. Review the directions for the preparation of the application.
7. **Budget Narrative Attachment Form** – The budget narrative should include a spreadsheet that shows each year’s cost for the salaries, fringe benefits, total salaries/wages, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual expenses, other cost, and indirect cost.

Requirements for Project Narrative — See Appendix A

All application review criteria in Section V must be addressed in the project narrative. The project narrative shall not exceed **15** pages in length. Pages refer to one side of a single-spaced, typed page. Font size should be no smaller than 10, and the application must be submitted on 8 ½” x 11” paper. Note that the **15** pages include all supporting materials such as resumes or *curriculum vitae* and letters of support. Documentation for the budget narrative, non-profit status, cost-share letters of commitment, and the SF-424 and SF-424A forms are **not** included in the page limit.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 C.F.R. Part 29. This program is eligible for coverage under Executive Order (EO) 12372, An Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. See this link for information and instructions: <https://wcms.epa.gov/grants/epa-region-3-grants-and-audit-management-branch-intergovernmental-review-process-and-single>. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your application is selected for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Administrative Cost Cap Requirement under Statutory Authority

Grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirements for “Administrative Costs” under the Section 117 (d)(4) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award (annual grant award = federal share plus cost-share). **Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet** is provided as an example of a method to calculate the 10-percent limitation. You are not required to submit Appendix B with your application.

Allowable Costs

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

the grant negotiation, any ineligible costs outlined in the application (i.e. lobbying activities) will be excluded in the final grant award.

E. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, 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 Jessica Durand
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Jessica Durand
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Rm # 51278
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.

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 application 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, 2018, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2018). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2018 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2019, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2019.

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

F. Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with [Grants.gov](https://www.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](https://www.grants.gov), go to 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](https://www.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 Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. 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 Unique Entity Identifier (e.g. 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](#).

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on [Grants.gov](#). Go to Grants.gov and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3-CBP-19-02 or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.466), in the appropriate field and click the Search button

Please Note: All applications must now be submitted through [Grants.gov](#) using the “Workspace” feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the [Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page](#).

Application Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](#) no later than **March 20, 2019 at 11:59 PM ET**. 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 accessed using the instructions above

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

- 1. Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance**
- 2. SF-424A, Budget Information**
- 3. SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs**
- 4. EPA Form 4700-4, Preaward Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance**
- 5. EPA Key Contacts Form**
- 6. Project Narrative Attachment Form**
- 7. Budget Narrative Attachment Form**

See Section IV. B. for additional instructions on preparing these materials.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact James Hargett at hargett.james@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

G. Technical Issues With Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call [Grants.gov](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.

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 by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to James Hargett with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact James Hargett at 410-267-5743. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant 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, it is essential to call 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 James Hargett at 410-267-5743.

b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, and you have already attempted to resolve the issue by contacting [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), send an email message to James Hargett at hargett.james@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 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 and it is too late to reapply, promptly send an email to James Hargett at hargett.james@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.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or via email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

H. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and sub-awards under grants, and application assistance and communications, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/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 applications 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. Evaluation Process

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

B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 100 points

The evaluation criteria below apply to Activity 1, Activity 2, and Activity 3 of this RFA.

Criteria	Points
1. Organizational Capability, Scope and Approach: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on: a. How well the application demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience in the proposed activity from Section I.B that is the subject of the application. (20 points) b. The quality of the application and how it demonstrates the ability to timely and successfully achieve the relevant activities to support the CBP	45

<p>partners described in Section I.B. regardless if the application encompasses one of the examples provided or puts forth an alternative approach that achieves the goal of each respective activity. (15 points)</p> <p>c. How well the application demonstrates that the applicant has the skill and experience working with and supporting multiple management agencies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholder collaborative efforts to provide technical and scientific expertise to enhance environmental protection decision-making. (10 points)</p>	
<p>2. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:</p> <p>a. Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative; (6 points)</p> <p>b. History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the project narrative including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not; (5 points)</p> <p>c. Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project; and (5 points)</p> <p>d. Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (5 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under items a and b 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 past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items a and b 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.</p>	21
<p>3. Cost-effectiveness: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate each application based on the degree of cost-effectiveness, considering the following factors: organizational overhead, budget breakdown, and ability to control cost for the relevant activity listed in Section I. (10 points)</p>	10

4. Transferability of Results to Similar Projects and/or Dissemination to the Public: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application includes an adequate plan to gather information and lessons learned from the project <u>and</u> transfer the documentation/information/data/results/recommendations to CBP partners and stakeholders across the Chesapeake Bay watershed in a timely manner. (6 points)	6
5. Seamless Transition: Applicants will be evaluated based on how well they can become fully functional in the roles described in the announcement once a cooperative agreement is awarded and how the applicant will bring about a “seamless” transition in the provision of the described support to the CBP partnership and its management structure. (6 points)	6
6. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (6 points)	6
7. Environmental Results: Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the environmental outputs and outcomes identified in Section I.C of the RFA. (6 points).	6

C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in Section V.B. above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and other CBP partner organizations with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of the CBP partnership. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked applications for each activity to the director or deputy director of CBPO for final selection. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider programmatic goals and priorities, including those described in the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* at https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement.

D. Additional Provisions

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 points and the other provisions that can be found at the website link <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing applications 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 and Instructions for Submission of Final Application

It is expected that applicants will be notified in writing of funding decisions on or around **May 3, 2019** either via email or U.S. Postal Service. This notification, which informs the applicant that

its application has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Region 3 grants office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grant award official is authorized to bind the government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding, or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grant award official, is the authorizing document and will be provided either via email or U.S. Postal Service.

Notification of selection does not indicate that the applicant can start work on the project. The selected applicant will be asked to submit a full federal assistance agreement application package. A federal project officer provides assistance in the application process and negotiates a work plan, budget, and starting date. Processing for this particular cooperative agreement award is expected to take 60 days.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

If your application is selected, the following information will be helpful in preparing your cooperative agreement application. Any information about general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/>

Federal Requirements

An applicant whose application is selected for federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award. If the same applicant is selected for more than one activity, EPA may request that the applicant submit a revised application that includes the activities they are selected for and may choose to issue one award to the applicant with multiple activities. EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final cooperative agreement amount and work plan content prior to award consistent with agency policies.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs (IDCs) may be budgeted and charged by recipients of Federal assistance agreements in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200. EPA's Indirect Cost Policy for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements (IDC Policy) implements the Federal regulations, and applies to all EPA assistance agreements, unless there are statutory or regulatory limits on IDCs. Further details may be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>

Incurred Costs

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

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

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

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

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

Deliverables

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

C. Reporting

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

D. Disputes

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

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/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 applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII: AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact James Hargett via email at hargett.james@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via email or fax at 410-267-5777 with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-R3-CBP-19-02). All questions and answers will be posted on <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>.

VIII: OTHER INFORMATION

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

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Management Strategies

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what_guides_us/watershed_agreement

Electronic copy of the *CBP Guidance for Data Management*

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-01/documents/attachment8cimsgrant_guidance.pdf

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

<https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans

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

Please visit the EPA Grants website (<https://www.epa.gov/grants>), the EPA Region 3 Grants website (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-your-region-information-specific-epa-region-3>) or the Chesapeake Bay Program website (<https://www.epa.gov/restoration-chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-program-grant-guidance>) if you have questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Further information on CBP committees is located at:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/how_we_are_organized.

Appendix A
Project Narrative Format
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, Region III
Chesapeake Bay Program Office Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Applications (RFA) for
Support for Development and Implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's
Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan
EPA-R3-CBP-19-02

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

- A. **Project Narrative Format:** Use the Project Narrative Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. Project narratives as described below shall not exceed 15 single-spaced pages. The project narrative must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper, and font size should be no smaller than 10. Note that the 15-page limit includes all supporting materials, resumes or *curriculum vitae*, and letters of support but **excludes** the budget narrative, documentation of non-profit status, and forms 1 through 5 as listed in Section IV. F. Applicants must ensure that the project narrative clearly identifies the activity number. Applicant's responses should be numbered and submitted according to the format listed below.

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

2. Background - Include the following in this section:

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

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

- i) A clear and concise discussion of how your organization will meet the objectives and requirements of the Program as described in Section I of the announcement for the relevant activity;
 - ii) Environmental Results – Outputs and Outcomes: Address how the application will meet the expected outputs and outcomes of this project and your plan for tracking and measuring your progress towards achieving them.
1. Output: An output is an environmental activity, effort, or work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced within the assistance agreement period. Expected outputs from the activities to be funded under this announcement are

identified in Section I of this solicitation.

2. Outcome: An outcome is a result, effect, or consequence that will result from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes are quantitative measures that may not necessarily be achievable within the assistance agreement period. Examples of potential outcomes under this announcement are identified in Section I of this solicitation.

- iii) Review Criteria: Address in narrative form each of the review criteria identified in Section V.B of the RFA. Identify by the review criteria number and title followed by your narrative.

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

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project as well as your staff's expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

- B. Budget Narrative - Use the Budget Narrative Attachment Form (see Section IV.F.) to submit this document. For the first year and each of the subsequent years, provide a budget narrative breakdown by the major budget categories (i.e. personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other, and indirect). In each of the budgets, include the cost-share amount (a minimum of five percent for each of the total project costs) and demonstrate how the cost-share will be met, including, if applicable, letters of commitment from any third-party contributors. Please note that subaward costs must be itemized under a separate sub-line item within the "Other" budget cost category.

In addition, grantees applying for CBP assistance agreements must adhere to the requirement for "Administrative Costs" under the Clean Water Act Section 117 (d)(4), 33 U.S.C. Section 1267 (d)(4), which states that administrative costs shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Information on how to calculate the 10 percent administration cost cap is located in Appendix B: Administrative Cost Cap Worksheet. To calculate the specific cost-share amount, follow these two-steps:

- 1) EPA amount (including any in-kind) ÷ 95% = 100% of Total Grant Amount
- 2) 100% of Total Grant Amount × 5% = Applicant's Cost-Share Amount

Appendix B
EPA-R3-CBP-19-02

SAMPLE
(DO NOT SUBMIT WORKSHEET WITH APPLICATION)

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE COST CAP
WORKSHEET

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

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

Line (b) cannot exceed Line (a).

COMPLIANCE WITH CWA SECTION 117 RESTRICTING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Statutory Authority

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

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

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

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

Guidance for Determining Administrative Costs

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

1. Administrative Costs

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

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

2. Non-administrative Costs

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

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

3. Calculation of Administrative Costs

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

4. Questions Regarding Administrative Costs

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