

**SOUTHEAST NEW ENGLAND PROGRAM FOR COASTAL WATERSHED RESTORATION
2019 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Region 1
 Funding Opportunity Title: Technical Assistance Network for the Southeast New England Program (“SNEP”)
 Announcement Type: Request for Applications (“RFA”)
 Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R1-SNEP-2019
 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (“CFDA”) Number: 66.129

Important Dates

RFA posted in Grants.gov	May 14, 2019
Informational Webinar	June 6, 2019 from 2:00 – 3:30 (see Section VII and http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp for details)
Closing date and application deadline	June 28, 2019 is the closing date for application packages to be submitted to be considered for funding. Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) by 11:59 pm EDT .
Applicant notification	July 12, 2019 EPA expects to notify the selected applicant.
Award of funds	September 25, 2019 EPA expects to award funds.

Applications must be received by electronic submission through Grants.gov on or before **11:59 P.M. EDT June 28, 2019**. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Questions regarding this Request for Applications must be submitted in writing via e-mail to SECoastalNE@epa.gov and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in **Section VII** before **June 21, 2019**. Responses to these questions will be compiled, posted on EPA’s website (<http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp>) and updated regularly. Following evaluation of applications, EPA will notify all applicants regarding their status by email on or around **July 12, 2019**.

Note to Applicants: If the applicant intends to name subawardees/sub-grantees and/or contractor(s) in their proposal to assist with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm.

For purposes of this RFA:

- The “applicant” refers to the organization submitting an application.
- “SNEP” refers to the Southeast New England Program. The term “SNEP geographic boundaries” refers to the south-facing coastal watersheds between Westerly, Rhode Island and Chatham, Massachusetts, the watersheds of the Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay National Estuary Programs (“NEPs”), and offshore islands of Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, Elizabeth Islands (Town of Gosnold, MA), and Block Island (Town of New Shoreham, RI). Projects must occur within this geographic area to be eligible to be considered for funding. A high-resolution map of the SNEP area is found in Appendix A and at <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp/background-information-southeast-new-england-coastal-watershed-restoration-program>.

- The “Network” refers to the Southeast New England Program Technical Assistance Network.
- The “Service Recipient” refers to the local community, tribe or organization that is utilizing the services provided by the Network.
- 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 over the term of the grant funding period. As an example, an output for a Phragmites removal project would be the removal of Phragmites from a specific number of acres.
- The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will be achieved by carrying out an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, must be quantitative, and may not necessarily be achievable within a grant funding period. As an example, an outcome for a Phragmites removal project would be a diversified, more natural ecosystem that sustains a wide variety of native species.

SUMMARY

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible entities (see **Section III.A**) under this announcement to support goals of the SNEP for coastal watershed restoration. Program objectives include improving water quality to reduce the impact of nutrients and bacteria on water quality and aquatic life; restoring physical processes that support critical habitat and ecosystem function; and aligning restoration and management efforts on a regional scale to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency.

This RFA reflects these objectives and is intended to enhance the impact and scale of local efforts, limit duplication, and provide financial and technical resources to local organizations. Under this RFA, EPA is soliciting applications from eligible organizations to establish and manage the Network to focus on the needs of the SNEP region by providing financial and technical expertise to local communities, tribes and organizations through offering one-stop customized advice, consultation, and training, and technical stormwater services to improve local capability to manage environmental programs and improve environmental outcomes.

The goal of the Network is to enhance regional capacity to address these priorities. EPA seeks to promote increased understanding and use of available financial and technical resources, best practices, and innovative approaches, particularly in the areas of stormwater management and financing for coastal watershed restoration efforts. This RFA sets forth a competitive process to solicit and select an eligible organization to administer the Network for local communities, tribes and organizations under one assistance agreement to be awarded under this announcement. Eligible applicants may provide services through existing partnerships of organizations, partnerships of organizations created in response to this RFA, and individual organizations.

For the purposes of this RFA, a partnership is an entity linked with or in a collaborative arrangement with other groups, enterprises, or organizations having similar goals for the restoration of southeast coastal New England and bringing required expertise, skills, and local knowledge. The selected recipient will manage the Network to obtain collaboration and support from the public and private sectors in performing the project to expand its impact and scope and to manage appropriate administrative and fiscal arrangements to provide services to Service Recipients described in Section I.B.

The Network should provide support to local communities, tribes, and organizations located in the SNEP region¹ and support activities that address common priorities within the SNEP boundaries. Funding provided under this announcement supports Goal 1 of the Fiscal Year 2018-2022 EPA Strategic Plan - Goal 1 - Core Mission: Deliver real results to provide Americans with clean air, land, and water, and ensure chemical safety, Objective 1.2 – Provide for Clean and Safe Water².

Applicants are not required to be located within the geographic area of southeastern coastal New England, but their projects **must be carried out within the SNEP geographic region**; to establish and manage a comprehensive Technical Assistance Network that builds regional capacity, EPA encourages applicants to have at least one local partner from within the SNEP geographic area. Applications must be SNEP-region in scale (see map in **Appendix A** for a map of the SNEP region) and support projects that address SNEP priorities within the SNEP boundaries.

Eligible applicants under this RFA are tribal, state, regional, and local governments; institutes of higher education; nonprofit institutions and organizations; intertribal consortia; and interstate agencies.³ For-profit organizations are not eligible applicants under this funding opportunity.

Additionally, non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. A non-profit organization, as defined by 2 CFR § 200.70, means “any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization, not including IHEs, that: (a) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable or similar purposes in the public interest; (b) is not organized primarily for profit; and (c) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve and/or expand the operations of the organization.” Note that 2 CFR § 200.70 specifically excludes institutions of higher education from the definition of non-profit organization. State, local and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments are separately defined at 2 CFR §§ 200.54, 200.62, and 200.90, respectively. While not considered to be non-profit organizations as defined by 2 CFR 200.70, Institutions of Higher Education are eligible to submit applications under this RFA. In addition, Indian tribe, local, and state governments are also eligible to submit applications. For-profit colleges, universities, and trade schools are ineligible. Although private businesses, federal agencies, and individuals are not eligible to apply, EPA encourages them to work in partnership with eligible applicants to provide expertise and services.

EPA plans to award one cooperative agreement for activities under this RFA and expects the total estimated FY2019 funding available for awards under this competitive opportunity will be up to **\$1.75 million this year and up to \$2 million in other years with a total of approximately \$6 million through FY2024**. EPA expects to fund one cooperative agreement under this RFA for a single entity to coordinate and manage the network contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. However, EPA expressly reserves the right to make no award or to incrementally fund a selected one.

An incrementally funded award will be subject to the availability of funding, future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. EPA requires the applicant to provide a minimum 15% match of the total Federal request (see **Section III.B** for information on the minimum non-federal 15 percent cost share/match requirement).

¹ See Appendix A for map of SNEP geographic boundaries and program description

² EPA’s Strategic Plan is available at <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

³ See **Section III. A** for definitions of eligible and ineligible entities

Current authorization for SNEP funding is contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019, which authorizes EPA to award grants and cooperative agreements to carry out SNEP, including planning, research, monitoring, outreach, and implementation projects within the SNEP geographic area.

Other Application Information: For the applicant’s convenience, EPA has created an RFA web page at <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp> to provide information relating to the RFA process as well as a link to frequently asked questions (“FAQs”). EPA encourages all applicants to sign up for SNEP’s mailing list by sending an email to SEcoastalNE@epa.gov requesting to be placed on the list to receive any updates regarding this RFA, the review process, and/or selections.

FUNDING/AWARDS: The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is up to \$6 million over five years. We anticipate awarding a single cooperative agreement from this announcement, subject to availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations.

CONTENTS BY SECTION

I. Funding Opportunity Description

II. Award Information

III. Eligibility Information

IV. Application and Submission Information

V. Application Review Information

VI. Award Administration Information

VII. Agency Contacts

VIII. Other Information (Appendices)

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

I.A. Background

The objective of the federal Clean Water Act (“CWA”) is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Despite continuing progress in achieving these goals, coastal ecosystems are recognized as particularly vulnerable to upstream pollution sources, fragmented management, and the impacts of stressors such as extreme weather, and sea-level rise. The coastal watersheds of southeast New England are prime examples of this vulnerability. The economy and community health of this region are directly tied to its unique ecological systems. These systems are currently impaired by excessive nutrients and bacteria from wastewater, septic systems, stormwater, and other land-based sources, and face future threats to resiliency from increasing ecological stressors and shifting socio-economic patterns. The traditional approach of agencies and organizations to address these problems independently has been confounded by a highly fragmented system of local government that creates jurisdictional barriers to reconciling different uses and priorities.

These issues call for a focus on the region’s common concerns and offer an opportunity for a more holistic approach to protecting aquatic ecosystems. EPA has responded by establishing the Southeast New England Program (“SNEP”), a geographically-based program serving as a collaborative framework for advancing ecosystem resiliency; protecting and restoring water quality, habitat, and ecosystem function; building capacity; and developing and applying innovative policy, science, and technology to environmental management in the coastal watersheds between Westerly, Rhode Island and Chatham on Cape Cod, and the Islands of Block Island, Nantucket, and Martha’s Vineyard. A critical aspect of this framework is the integration of physical processes, water quality, and critical habitat at a regional, watershed, and/or landscape scale. This ecosystem-based approach increases the effectiveness of

regional restoration efforts throughout the SNEP region by enhancing the impact and scale of local efforts and limiting duplication. It enables sharing of financial and management resources, and builds sustainable frameworks and partnerships needed to invest in wise restoration and proactive measures over the long-term.

To enhance regional capacity to address these priority issues, EPA seeks to promote increased understanding and use of available financial and technical resources, best practices and innovative approaches, particularly in the areas of stormwater management and environmental financing.

Under this RFA, EPA is soliciting applications from eligible organizations to establish and manage the SNEP Technical Assistance Network (the “Network”) that will focus on needs of the SNEP region by partnering with diverse sources of expertise to offer one-stop customized advice, consultation, and services to communities and organizations seeking to improve their capability to manage environmental programs and improve environmental outcomes.

I.B. SNEP Technical Assistance Network Objectives

SNEP’s position as a partnership facilitator among government and non-governmental organizations is central to its mission to build capacity of local communities and partners; empower collective action to improve water quality and restore habitat; sustain coastal ecosystem services and functions; and promote sustainable communities by protecting and restoring natural resources that support health and safety, recreation, overall quality of life, and resilient economies. To accomplish these objectives, the RFA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to develop, establish, and operate the Network, which will focus on southeastern New England (see map in **Appendix A** for a map of the SNEP region). The Network is intended to provide customized practical products, consultation, and services to help communities better assess and address critical environmental management problems by offering assistance and training to local communities, tribes, and environmental organizations to improve financial and environmental decision-making, stormwater management, and assistance with fiscal and watershed restoration planning.

Applicants should demonstrate their ability and describe their approach to establish and manage a regional program that addresses SNEP priorities listed in this RFA, including documenting in-depth knowledge and familiarity with the coastal watersheds, governmental institutions, and local environmental concerns of southeast New England, and describing plans for providing necessary services and obtaining appropriate expertise.

Applicants may propose a variety of approaches to managing the Network. Examples include: designing a system for identifying and funding non-profit organizations and institutions of higher education qualified to assist in operating the Network; preparing and advertising a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to a variety of for-profit contractors, non-profit contractors or subawardees to provide services to support the operation of the Network; and/or securing sources of financial or in-kind sponsorship to support the Network. Operation of the Network must be consistent with requirements for financial transactions in the Uniform Grant Guidance (“UGG”) (See [2 CFR Part 200](#)⁴), and, depending on the proposed approach, must address use of subawards and/or contracts to support Network operations and services consistent with the UGG. See [2 CFR §§ 200.22 \(contracts\) and 200.92 \(subawards\)](#). Note that proposals using contractor support must provide for competing the contracts for supplies,

⁴ To view 2 CFR Part 200, visit: <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=02466ad17ad1ab5617c6b6554ccd82dc&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5>

equipment, and services, including consultant contracts; applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering, or other firms assisting with their proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application or experience with the applicant. (See 2 CFR §§ 200.317 - 200.326 and the Contracts and Subawards clause, located in the additional provisions link provided in **Section IV.F** of this solicitation).

We anticipate awarding a single cooperative agreement from this announcement, subject to availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. Applicants should describe their plan in their budget narrative for the 5-year project period. Projects and any subawards funded under the cooperative agreement must be completed prior to the end of the cooperative agreement project period.

The approach to provide services performed by the recipient could include, but is not limited to:

- Administering the Network, including determining target communities and sectors needing assistance and identifying opportunities for outreach, and establishing program goals, oversight, and management procedures;
- Identifying and making available expertise responsive to the goals and priorities listed above in **Section I.A** and **Section I.B** of this announcement; and if necessary preparing and issuing RFPs for subawards and/or contracts consistent with EPA grants and procurement requirements;
- Providing financial, environmental management, and stormwater-related technical support to local communities and environmental organizations by coordinating and offering outreach, training, conceptual BMP designs, consultation, information resources, and peer-to-peer tech transfer;
- Developing a standardized finance decision tool that can be customized for towns in the SNEP region to align their needs, financial sources, and payment options;
- Building local capacity to plan for the development, conceptual design, and maintenance of BMPs, and incorporate important landscape features, natural and grey infrastructure, environmental issues, funding sources, and/or potential solutions to restore hydrology, habitat health, and improve resilience to extreme weather and sea-level rise;
- Qualitatively and quantitatively measuring and reporting the outputs and outcomes of the environmental results of activities and support services undertaken; and
- Furthering SNEP priorities by facilitating partnerships, networking, and tech transfer to plan future implementation efforts and build regional capacity.

The above are examples of the types of activities expected of the applicant. Applicants may also describe additional activities for the Network that would amplify its reach and broaden the target communities within the expected budget constraints of this RFA. Note: final design, construction, and implementation of practices is not an eligible activity under this award.

By using the Network approach, the recipient could offer the following types of services to Service Recipients.

<u>Financial</u>	<u>Stormwater</u>
Provide in-person 1-on-1 consultations regarding financial needs and current environmental management capacities	Assist with stormwater planning to restore the hydrology and water quality in a watershed or town (e.g. identify practices, opportunities to address impervious cover or lead towns from pre-concept to conceptual design)
Identify locally appropriate funding and new sources of revenue for water quality and habitat restoration projects	Assist in developing construction, operation and maintenance specifications for consultant services and help towns identify appropriate stormwater consultation services
Identify an appropriate funding mix that maximizes affordability and/or creates environmental co-benefits such as, improved water quality, and restored habitat	Identify potentially applicable nature-based stormwater management solutions that prevent or remediate stormwater impacts and create multiple benefits such as increased resiliency, habitat restoration, recreational opportunities, or other aspects of community well-being
Help towns articulate consultant needs and identify and secure appropriate financial consultation services for water quality and environmental management projects	Explore and recommend use of available tools to help optimize the selection of the type, placement, sizing, and cost of BMPs (ex. Opti-tool model)
Provide customized fiscal analysis, including demonstrating and using finance decision tools for environmental projects	Assist with developing watershed and regional solutions to stormwater problems
Provide direct water quality and environmental management project training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing, setting-up, and maintaining fiscal and project tracking systems • Preparing and executing solicitations for consultant, accounting, and data management services, including developing reasonable cost estimates 	Provide direct training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimal selection and siting of BMPs, including introduction to innovative practices and analysis of operation and maintenance considerations • Municipal stormwater (“MS4”) and total maximum daily load (“TMDL”) requirements • Preparing and executing solicitations for consultant, design, and engineering services, including developing reasonable cost estimates
Assist with process of developing and testing innovative funding approaches to water quality and environmental management projects	Assist with BMP restoration and maintenance tracking, including identifying indicators of environmental improvement
Conduct analyses of action vs. no action scenarios for water quality and environmental management projects	Assist with mapping out opportunities for action to address impairments in a watershed
Assist with development of funding applications for water quality and environmental management projects	
Provide regional workshops on funding sources and approaches for water quality and environmental management projects	

Expertise to be provided by the Network includes, but is not limited to:

- Comprehensive understanding of SNEP region environmental conditions, including water quality, watershed, and habitat conditions as well as familiarity with CWA and state water quality TMDL requirements;
- In-depth knowledge of the legal, regulatory, political, fiscal, and institutional frameworks governing environmental and municipal management in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts, including:
 - knowledge of local and regional environmental concerns and solutions
 - understanding of municipal and tribal governments in the SNEP region and their enabling conditions (specifically legislation/authorities);
 - experience working with local cities, towns, and tribes in the SNEP region; and
 - working knowledge of MS4/TMDL obligations as implemented in Rhode Island and Massachusetts;
- Experience with environmental economics, calculation of ecosystem services, and financial modeling;
- Experience with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and environmental modeling;
- Experience in developing and applying indicators and metrics of success and environmental improvement, including biological/habitat indicators;
- Familiarity, background, and recent experience with a variety of stormwater tools, including stormwater management planning, conceptual design, operation and maintenance, aggregate results, and construction oversight;
- Understanding and experience in identifying and calculating co-benefits of various environmental options, including nature-based solutions and innovative practices and technologies;
- Knowledge of conventional and innovative approaches for private, federal, state and local financing options and how to apply a mix of options to town water quality and environmental management needs, including opportunities for developing public/private partnerships to address funding constraints;
- Knowledge of private, federal, state, tribal and local funding processes for water quality and other environmental management projects, including requirements under both grant and procurement sources;
- Experience in conveying financial information and providing communication/training for water quality and environmental management projects;
- Participation in national networks of finance innovators and/or professional stormwater associations; and
- Experience in managing environmental assets to serve diverse communities and diverse needs.

The above are examples of types of services and expertise to be provided by the Network. In addition to considering these examples, applicants may also describe alternative expertise and services needed to build capacity of municipalities and other environmental implementers to identify watershed problems and develop viable solutions. Final design, construction, and implementation of plans are not eligible uses of these funds.

Statutory authority for this action is the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019, which authorizes EPA to award grants and cooperative agreements to carry out SNEP, including planning, research, monitoring, outreach, and implementation projects within the SNEP geographic area.

I.C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs, and Performance Measures

Under Section 6.a of EPA Order 5700.7, “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,” EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency’s Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. See EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements (http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-03/documents/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf).

Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan

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: Deliver real results to provide Americans with clean air, land, water, and ensure chemical safety, Objective 1.2, Provide for Clean and Safe Water of the EPA Strategic Plan. All applications must be for projects that support Goal 1, Objective 1.2.

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 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 Network to be funded under this announcement may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Number and list of services provided to local communities, tribes and organizations by the Network (list must be in easy to use and read formatted spreadsheets or another similar electronic tool);
- Number of communities and/or tribes in the SNEP region that request and are provided with fiscal or stormwater assistance;
- Fiscal analyses that incorporate public health, community well-being, and aggregate benefits into environmental management/financing decisions;
- Number of stormwater management plans that incorporate nature-based stormwater solutions
- Number of trainings requested and provided for financial and stormwater topics;
- Opportunities identified to develop public/private partnerships or other innovative finance mechanisms for water quality, and environmental management projects; and
- Criteria and methods for evaluating and tracking success and sustainability of assistance implemented through the Network.

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

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 environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of potential outcomes under activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Increased capacity of municipalities to identify watershed problems and develop and implement viable solutions;
- Increased number of local water quality or habitat projects implemented within the SNEP region;
- Creation of sustainable funding sources to support activities resulting in pollution reduction;
- Increased understanding of local officials on how to use and maintain nature-based solutions;
- Creation of sustainable partnerships and/or other management collaboratives to operate across the SNEP region;
- Improved capacity among state, tribal and local governments to finance environmental restoration activities;
- Increased support for and implementation of co-benefit or multiple benefit water quality and habitat restoration projects; and
- Strategic water quality and environmental management investments resulting from innovative financial assistance.

Minority Serving Institutions

EPA recognizes that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental challenges the nation faces. At the same time, EPA seeks to expand the environmental conversation by including members of communities which may have not previously participated in such dialogues to participate in EPA programs. For this reason, EPA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including minority serving institutions (“MSIs”), to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered MSIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061). A list of these schools can be found at [Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#);
2. Tribal Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at [American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities](#);
3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at [Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#);
4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(a)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions](#); and
5. Predominately Black Institutions, as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. § 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at [Predominately Black Institutions](#).

II. AWARD INFORMATION

II.A. Funding Amount and Expected Number of Awards

EPA expects to award up to \$1.75 million in the first year and up to \$6 million in total over five years as a cooperative agreement under this RFA for a single entity to establish, coordinate, and manage the Network, contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received, and other applicable

considerations. An incrementally funded award will be subject to the availability of funding, future appropriation levels, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. EPA requires that the applicant provide a minimum 15 percent match of the total federal request (see **Section III.B** for information on the minimum 15 percent non-federal cost share/match requirement).

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

II.B. Award Type

EPA has determined that a cooperative agreement is the appropriate funding vehicle for this project. Cooperative agreements are used under circumstances where substantial involvement is anticipated between EPA and the recipient during performance of the activity(ies). Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; review of proposed procurements (in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.318(i)); review 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 award, federal involvement would typically be in an advisory and oversight capacity. This involvement could include participation in workshop/forum planning committees as well as involvement in communication and data sharing efforts. EPA will not make final contractual or subaward decisions or selections; the grantee will make the final contractual or subaward selections and administer the contracts and subawards. All the work conducted under any funded contracts or subawards must be to provide services outlined in the EPA approved final Scope of Work.

Specifically, EPA expects to be substantially involved by:

- Monitoring performance to verify the results proposed in applicant's application;
- Collaborating on activities carried out during performance of the Scope of Work;
- Reviewing any proposed procurements and subawards in accordance with 2 CFR §§ 200.317, 200.318, 200.330, and 200.331;
- Approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- Reviewing and commenting on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (applicants make final decisions on the content of reports).

EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process with the selected applicant.

II.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 an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

II.D. Expected Project Period

The expected project period for the cooperative agreements is through Fiscal Year 2024 (up to 5 years), with funding provided on an annual basis. No commitment for funding can be made beyond the first year.

The expected start date for the awards resulting from this RFA is **October 1, 2019**. To ensure timely closeout and reporting of results, please note that any projects funded through subawards from this award must be completed no later than six months before the end of the project period.

II.E. Pre-Award Costs

Recipients may incur otherwise eligible and allowable pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award at their own risk without prior approval of EPA's award official. Pre-award costs must comply with 2 CFR 200.308. If EPA determines that the requested pre-award costs comply with the relevant federal cost principles contained in the UGG Cost Principles, 2 CFR Part 220, Subpart E, and that the costs are justified as allocable to the project, then these costs may be included as allowable expenditures at the time that the assistance award document is prepared. However, if for any reason EPA does not fund the proposal or the amount of the award is less than the applicant anticipated, then EPA is under no obligation to reimburse the applicant for these costs incurred. Thus, applicants incur pre-award costs at their own risk. Costs incurred more than 90 days prior to award require the approval of EPA Region 1's grant official.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

III.A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants under this RFA are tribal, state, regional, and local governments; institutes of higher education; nonprofit institutions and organizations; intertribal consortia; and interstate agencies.⁵ For-profit organizations are not an eligible applicant under this funding opportunity. Additionally, non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

A non-profit organization, as defined by 2 CFR § 200.70, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve and/or expand its operations. Note that 2 CFR § 200.70 specifically excludes institutions of higher education from the definition of non-profit organization. In addition, state, local and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments are separately defined in the regulations. While not considered to be non-profit organizations as defined by 2 CFR § 200.70, institutions of higher education and state, local and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. For-profit colleges, universities, and trade schools are ineligible. Although private businesses, federal agencies, and individuals are not eligible to apply, EPA encourages them to work in partnership with eligible applicants to provide expertise and services.

⁵ See **Section III. A** for definitions of eligible and ineligible entities

III.B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirements

All applicants must demonstrate that they can contribute a minimum non-federal cost share/match of 15 percent of the federal request.

Match/cost shares can be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, salaries or other verifiable costs and must be carefully documented. Involvement from foundations, watershed groups, private sector, eligible governmental, as well as non-conventional partners can help with the match. The match/cost share must be for allowable costs under the SNEP funding authority described in subsection I.E, and any restrictions on the use of grant funds also apply to the use of cost share/matching funds. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. All funds are subject to federal audit. Applicants that do not describe how they will meet the minimum match/cost share requirement in their submission will not be considered for funding. Other federal grants may not be used as cost shares/matches without specific statutory authority. Regulations governing match/cost share requirements are at 2 CFR § 200.306. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.306(c), unrecovered indirect costs may be included as part of the entity's cost sharing or matching requirement. Thus, applicants with a negotiated indirect cost rate may choose to provide a percentage of their costs as match. For example, if your negotiated indirect cost rate is 43% then the difference of 18% may be claimed as match.

To calculate the minimum match under this RFA, use the following formula:

$$\text{Total Federal Funds Requested (\$)} \text{ multiplied by } 0.15 = \text{minimum cost share/match (\$)}.$$

For example, if the applicant is requesting \$1,000,000, they must be able to provide \$150,000 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match. The federal funds requested plus the match amount provided is the total project cost.

III.C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Only applications from eligible applicants (see **Section III.A** above) will be evaluated against the criteria in **Section V.B**. Below are threshold criteria that applications must meet to be considered for funding. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration resulting from the threshold eligibility review will be notified in writing within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

- Applicants may be located outside of the geographic area of southeastern coastal New England, but their projects **must be carried out within the SNEP geographic region**. EPA encourages applicants to have at least one local partner from within the SNEP geographic area. Applications must be SNEP-region in scale (see map in **Appendix A** for a map of the SNEP region) and support projects that address SNEP priorities within the SNEP boundaries.
 - The geographic area of the southeast New England Region includes south-facing coastal watersheds between Westerly, Rhode Island to Chatham, Massachusetts, the watersheds of the Narragansett Bay and Buzzards Bay National Estuary Programs (“NEPs”), and off-shore islands of Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, Elizabeth Islands (Town of Gosnold, MA), and Block Island (Town of New Shoreham, RI). Subaward projects must take place within this geographic area to be eligible for consideration of funding. A high resolution map of the SNEP area is provided at <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp/background-information-southeast-new-england-coastal-watershed-restoration-program> and in **Appendix A**.
- 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. Note that if

the application exceeds the page limitation stated in **Appendix B**, EPA will not review the excess pages and the information they contain will not be factored into the evaluation.

- Applications must be submitted through www.Grants.gov as stated in **Section IV** of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed 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. 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 or relevant System for Award Management (SAM) system issues (found at SAM.gov). An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with the designated contact identified in **Section VII** as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in the application not being reviewed.
- Applications must support EPA Strategic Plan Goal1-Core Mission: Deliver real results to provide Americans with clean air, land and water, and ensure chemical safety. (See **Section I.C**)
- Applications must demonstrate how the cost-share requirements of **Section III.B** will be met.
- 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 proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

IV.A. 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 Unique Entity Identifier (e.g., 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 a 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, 2019, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2019). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31st 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, 2020, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2020. 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.

Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed to apply through 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, 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 SAM and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and

should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on Grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose 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 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-R1-SNEP-2019, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.129 EPA), 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 **June 28, 2019** 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit all application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package accessed using the instructions above.

Application Materials The following forms and documents are required under this announcement and can be found in grants.gov in the SF-424 Family tab under the Forms Repository.

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
5. EPA Form 4700-4 – Preaward Compliance Review Report
6. Proposal Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form) -- prepared as described in **Appendix B** of the announcement

7. Budget Detail (Budget Narrative Attachment Form) – prepared as described in **Appendix C. See Appendix C for an example of expected format to include a budget narrative and a budget table.**

8. Other Attachments

- Resumes or curriculum vitae of staff that will be working developing the Network.
- Letters of commitment from any partners identified in the proposal to confirm the partnership. If no partners are identified, letters of commitment are not required.
- List documenting past or ongoing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements administered by the applicant, including documentation supporting grant performance and meeting of reporting requirements. If the applicant has no history of federally or non-federally funded assistance agreements, they must submit a statement indicating this.
- Examples of environmental, conservation/restoration, water quality, or stormwater planning or implementation activities conducted in partnership with communities, tribes and/or organizations in the SNEP coastal region.
- Documentation of non-profit status, such as federal or state certification, if appropriate.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt via email directly from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 7 days of the application deadline, please contact Karen Simpson, at (617) 918-1672. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

Technical Issues with Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the "Submit" button should be enabled. If the "Submit" button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced, or a revised application needs to be submitted.
2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the "submit" button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch, and a sign-in page will appear. Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow enough time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation. The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.

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

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 decide concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to SECoastalNE@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Karen Simpson at (617) 918-1672. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to Grants.gov or relevant <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.
 - a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be sure to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Karen Simpson at (617) 918-1672.
 - b. **Unsuccessful transfer of the application package:** If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, and you have already attempted to resolve the issue by contacting Grants.gov, send an email message to SECoastalNE@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.
 - c. **Grants.gov rejection of the application package:** If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal and it is too late to reapply, promptly send an email to SECoastalNE@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 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.

IV.B. Allowable Costs

EPA assistance agreement funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the cooperative agreement and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Federal funds may not be used for the implementation of final BMP plans or to construct BMPs, 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 applicable federal cost principles contained in the UGG Cost Principles, 2 CFR Part 220, Subpart E. During the grant negotiation,

any ineligible costs outlined in the proposal e.g., lobbying activities) will be excluded in the final grant award.

IV. C. Programmatic Capability: Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate that they will work with appropriate partners to effectively and efficiently implement the proposed project, whether their project is coordinated with and/or complements other projects or activities being performed by the applicant or others to expand the project’s impact, and the scope of the partnership collaboration.

IV.D. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into The Solicitation: Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These and the other provisions that can be found at the website link are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

V.A. Evaluation Process

After EPA reviews applications for threshold eligibility as described in **Section III**, eligible applications will be reviewed by a team of professionals from EPA with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of SNEP. All reviewers will sign a conflict of interest statement indicating there is no real or perceived conflict between their financial and personal interests and the applications they review.

V.B. Evaluation Criteria: Maximum score: 135 points

Criteria	Points
<p>1. Technical Assistance Network Description: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on how well the application demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ability to establish and manage a comprehensive Technical Assistance Network designed to timely and successfully support and achieve the priorities identified in this RFA in Section I.B (10 points); b. skill, experience, and resources, and the ability to (25 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. identify, secure, and oversee sources of expertise and knowledge called for in Section I.B, potentially from individuals, state and local agencies, for-profit and non-profit organizations, and academic institutions; ii. create and administer a system to efficiently respond to, coordinate, track, and oversee diverse requests for targeted assistance within the SNEP geographic boundaries; iii. manage multiple providers of targeted assistance under a variety of fiscal and institutional arrangements; and iv. communicate and interact with a variety of audiences with varying levels of capacity, and knowledge; c. familiarity and local experience with institutional and historical conditions, including relevant advisory experience working with local 	45

<p>communities, tribes and environmental organizations in the SNEP region to successfully convene and facilitate significant technical assistance efforts. (10 points)</p>	
<p>2. Programmatic Capability: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the applicant based on how well the application demonstrates the applicant’s programmatic capability to successfully perform the proposed activity considering organizational experience and staff expertise, including: (30 points):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Relevant staff technical expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources, and the ability to obtain experienced and qualified staff, to successfully achieve the environmental goals for their proposed application (10 points); b. Relevant organizational and administrative capacity, experiences, travel capabilities (e.g., ability to conduct site visits, onsite audits of technical assistance sites, manage complex fiscal and administrative requirements, and other needed oversight to successfully administer the tasks of executing and managing the network) (10 points) c. Demonstrated ability to work with appropriate partners to effectively and efficiently implement the proposed project, including the applicant’s plans for obtaining collaboration and support from the public and private sectors in performing the project in order to expand its impact; the scope of the partnership (including the diversity/variety and number of partners);the type of collaboration proposed; the likelihood that it will materialize during project performance; and what role it will play in the overall project. This also includes consideration of any voluntary cost-match or other form of leveraging to demonstrate support for the project. Applicants that do not plan on collaborating with other groups in project performance will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how they will be able to effectively perform and complete the project without such collaboration. (10 points) <p><i>Note: In evaluating applicants under items a. and b. of these criteria, 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 the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance, they must indicate this in the proposal and will receive a neutral score for these subfactors. A neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, they will receive a score of zero for these subfactors.</i></p>	<p>30</p>
<p>3. Past Performance: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the applicant based on how well the application demonstrates the applicant’s programmatic capability to successfully perform the proposed activity considering (10 points):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Past performance in successfully completing federal- and non-federally-funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements and federal contracts similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years (applicant should include no more than five, preferably EPA agreements). Successful completion of federally-funded assistance agreements also includes the applicant organization’s history of meeting reporting requirements and 	<p>10</p>

<p>submission of acceptable final technical reports under those agreements (5 points);</p> <p>b. Extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress in achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federal agency assistance agreements and contracts performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not (5 points).</p> <p><i>Note: In evaluating applicants under items a. and b. of these criteria, 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 the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance, they must indicate this in the proposal and will receive a neutral score for these subfactors. A neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, they will receive a score of zero for these subfactors.</i></p>	
<p>4. Cost-effectiveness: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application is cost-effective, considering the following factors: organizational overhead; indirect costs; approach to choosing funding vehicles (e.g., subawards vs contracts); costs versus anticipated results of services; prudent cost allocations over the life of the award; organizational and partner resources brought to the effort; ability to meet match requirements, consistency with requested budget narrative; and ability to perform the duties within SNEP’s geographic area and the operational range of budgets provided by SNEP. Applicants who budget lower indirect cost rates will receive higher scores. (15 points)</p>	15
<p>5. Tracking and Measuring Environmental Results: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which it demonstrates the applicant’s ability to:</p> <p>a. Assess effectiveness of its approach responding to requests for assistance and providing appropriate resources; and (10 points)</p> <p>b. Characterize specific environmental results that will be targeted for technical assistance by activities proposed within the SNEP region. (10 points)</p>	20
<p>6. Transferability of Results: Under this criterion, reviewers will evaluate the application based on the degree to which the application includes an adequate plan to:</p> <p>a. Gather, assess, and develop information to support lessons learned from the proposed activities; (5 points) and</p> <p>b. Transfer the documentation/information/data/results/recommendations to SNEP, SNEP partners, and stakeholders in the SNEP region in a timely manner so that the SNEP can disseminate in a timely manner. (5 points)</p>	10
<p>7. 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. (5 points)</p>	5

V.C. Review and Selection Process

Eligible proposals will be evaluated and ranked using the criteria stated in **Section V.B.** above by a panel of reviewers from EPA and other federal agencies with a working knowledge of the technical analysis and programmatic evaluation needs of SNEP. The review team will then forward the highest-ranked proposals to the selection official for final selection. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also consider funding availability as well as programmatic goals and priorities, the mix of service providers proposed in the network, geographic accessibility or proximity to service recipients (e.g., how close to the SNEP region are they and their providers so that an excessive amount of the budget is not spent on travel).

V.D. Additional Provisions Incorporated by Reference

Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation: Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation including the clause on Reporting and Use of Information Concerning Recipient Integrity and Performance can be found on the [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#) page. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

VI.A. Award Notices and Instructions for Submission of Final Application: EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via e-mail on or around **July 12, 2019**. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal or the project contact listed in the proposal. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA Region 1 Grants Management Branch, Mission Support Division. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants management officer 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 grants management officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

VI.B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The following information will be helpful in preparing the application. A general overview of EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/introduction-regulations-policies-and-guidance-epa-grants>.

Federal Requirements: An applicant selected for federal funding may need to revise their forms prior to award (see Section IV.A. for the list of required materials). 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 CFR Part 200 and EPA’s Indirect Cost Policy for Recipients of EPA

Assistance Agreements (“IDC Policy”). The following applies to all EPA assistance agreements, unless there are statutory or regulatory limits on IDCs.

In order for an assistance agreement recipient to use EPA funding for indirect costs, the IDC category of the recipient’s assistance agreement award budget must include an amount for IDCs and at least one of the following must apply:

- With the exception of “exempt” agencies and Institutions of Higher Education as noted below, all recipients must have one of the following current (not expired) IDC rates, including IDC rates that have been extended by the cognizant agency:
 - Provisional;
 - Final;
 - Fixed rate with carry-forward;
 - Predetermined;
 - 10% de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR § 200.414(f); or
 - EPA-approved use of one of the following:
 - 10% de minimis as detailed in section 6.3 of the IDC Policy; or
 - Expired fixed rate with carry-forward as detailed in section 6.4.a. of the IDC Policy.
- “Exempt” state or local governmental departments or agencies are agencies that receive up to and including \$35,000,000 in Federal funding per the department or agency’s fiscal year, and must have an IDC rate proposal developed in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 Appendix VII, with documentation maintained and available for audit.
- Institutions of Higher Education must use the IDC rate in place at the time of award for the life of the assistance agreement (unless the rate was provisional at time of award, in which case the rate will change once it becomes final). As provided by 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix III, section C.(7), the term “life of the assistance agreement”, means each competitive segment of the project. Additional information is available in the regulation.

IDCs incurred during any period of the assistance agreement that are not covered by the provisions above are not allowable costs and must not be drawn down by the recipient. Recipients may budget for IDCs pending approval of their IDC rate by the cognizant Federal agency or an exception granted by EPA under section 6.3 or 6.4 of the IDC Policy. However, recipients may not draw down IDCs until their rate is approved or EPA grants an exception.

The IDC Policy does not govern indirect rates for subrecipients or recipient procurement contractors under EPA assistance agreements. Pass-through entities are required to comply with 2 CFR § 200.331(a)(4) when establishing indirect cost rates for subawards. See the IDC Policy for additional information.

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

Food and Entertainment Costs: EPA project officers and grant specialists have been provided guidance on determining the allowability and reasonableness of certain cost items under assistance agreements.

The guidance indicates that the use of EPA grant funds for light refreshments and meals at meetings, conferences, training workshops, and outreach activities (events) must be justified by the assistance recipient, identified in the budget detail, allowable under the UGG at 2 CFR Subpart E and EPA guidance, and approved by the EPA Award Official. See 2 CFR §§ 200.432, 200.438 and https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-05/documents/recipient_guidance_selected_items_of_cost_final.pdf. Further, EPA will not approve the use of grant funds for any portion of an event where alcohol is served, purchased, or otherwise available even if grant funds are not used to purchase the alcohol.

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans: In accordance with 2 CFR § 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 enough to produce data of adequate quality to meet program objectives. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-2: EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans (refer to <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/r2-final.pdf>, Chapter 2). The recipient's QMP should be reviewed and updated annually as needed. The QMP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 45 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation.

The recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are enough to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The QAPP is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA project officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Requirements for QAPPs can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/r5-final.pdf>.

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

VI.C. Reporting

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

VI.D. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into The Solicitation:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These and the other provisions that can be found at the website link are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

EPA will host an informational webinar on **June 6, 2019** from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm EDT. **To participate, please register by sending an email to SECoastalNE@epa.gov no later than June 5, 2019.**

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact SNEP via email at SECoastalNE@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via email with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-R1-SNEP-2019) no later than **June 21, 2019**. All questions and answers, and additional information on the informational webinar will be posted on <http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp>.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

In developing the proposal, the applicant may find the following documents helpful.

Southeast New England Program for Coastal Watershed Restoration Website
<https://www.epa.gov/snecwrp>

EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans and Quality Assurance Plans
http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html

EPA Strategic Plan
<http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>

Please visit the EPA Grants website (<http://www.epa.gov/ogd>) for questions about grant issues such as costs or eligibility.

Appendix B

Format for Proposal Narratives (Project Narrative Attachment Form)

Proposal narratives must be no longer than 12 numbered pages (8 ½ x 11 inches, single spaced, font size no smaller than 10) and must address the evaluation criteria in **Section V.B**. The first page should include applicant contact information and proposal title. The 12 pages do not include the listed other materials, the budget narrative and detail, and the SF-424 and SF-424A, SF-424B, Form 5700-54 and Form 4700-4.

The proposal narrative should include:

- **Technical Assistance Network Description:** Applicants should thoroughly discuss their approach for developing a SNEP Technical Assistance Network as identified in the announcement and the criteria in **Section V.B**, their development and implementation process and schedule, and their approach for addressing any challenges or changes that may arise over the course of the project. Discussion of the schedule should show how it aligns tasks associated with the project to achieve the project's goals and objectives by the project's end.
- **Programmatic Capability:**
 - Applicants should discuss their approach to seeking, selecting, and overseeing technical assistance partners and activities that will contribute to building state and local capacity to manage environmental programs in the SNEP region, as well as advance progress towards SNEP's long-term goals for quantifiable water quality and ecosystem improvements.
 - Applicants should discuss their familiarity with the institutional and historical conditions of the region, including impediments to collaboration and regional approaches, their organizational qualifications, including administrative capacity, travel capabilities, outreach expertise, and the qualifications of staff and project partners, if any.
 - Applicants should address how they will seek out expertise to support local communities, particularly in the financing and stormwater aspects of environmental management
 - If applicants plan on collaborating with other groups, applicants should identify appropriate partners and discuss how these partners will effectively and efficiently implement the proposed project. Applicants that do not plan on collaborating with other groups in project performance should discuss how they will be able to effectively perform and complete the project without such collaboration.
- **Past Performance:**
 - Applicants should submit a list of federally and non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe:
 - whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements, and
 - history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in **Section V**, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from

current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you will receive a score of 0 for these factors. In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

- Cost Effectiveness:
 - Applicants should discuss the degree to which their project is cost-effective considering the following factors: organizational overhead; indirect costs; approach to choosing funding vehicles (e.g., subawards vs contracts); costs versus anticipated results of services; prudent cost allocations over the life of the award; organizational and partner resources brought to the effort; ability to meet match requirements, consistency with requested budget narrative; and ability to perform the duties within SNEP's geographic area and the operational range of budgets provided by SNEP.
 - Applicants should include a budget narrative (See **Appendix C.1**).
- Tracking and Measuring Environmental Results: Applicants should detail their plan and approach for measuring, monitoring, and reporting progress in achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs. Examples of outcomes and outputs can be found in **Section I.C**. Applicants should demonstrate their knowledge of local environmental challenges as well as innovative financing, management, and restoration/protection approaches that could be offered to service recipients to contend with these challenges.
- Transferability of Results: Applicants should discuss how the lessons and results of the application will be documented and shared widely and easily with agencies, partners, stakeholders, and resource managers both within and outside of the SNEP watershed.
- Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds: Applicants should discuss their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended and the project will be completed in a timely and efficient manner.

Appendix C

Include a budget table and a budget narrative. (Budget Narrative Attachment Form)

C.1. Budget Narrative

The budget narrative is as important as the table in describing the expected costs of the project and should cross-reference the budget table, providing explanation of all costs, including the purpose of the expenditure and how the cost was calculated. Where possible, the budget narrative should be keyed to tasks and deliverables from the project description. Salary costs should be identified by individual and may be calculated on an hourly or percentage basis. Contractual costs must follow UGG competitive procurement requirements. See 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart D. Sub-awards to non-profit organizations need not be competed, but the budget must provide a breakdown of costs. Note all sources of match and whether cash or in-kind.

Indirect Costs

The calculation of indirect costs and amount of reimbursement depends on various factors. Please see EPA's [Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-08/documents/indirect-cost-policy-guidance-for-recipients-of-epa-assistance-agreements.pdf) (<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-08/documents/indirect-cost-policy-guidance-for-recipients-of-epa-assistance-agreements.pdf>) for additional information. Further guidance is available by submitting questions in writing via e-mail to SECoastalNE@epa.gov. Questions must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before June 21, 2019. Responses to these questions will be compiled, posted on EPA's website (<http://www.epa.gov/snecwrp>) and updated regularly.

C.2. Budget Table

All budget tables should provide clear, complete and defensible information on project costs and should categorize costs by category; should specify request vs. match; and should specify cash vs. in-kind match. Below is an example budget table.

Sample Budget Detail:

Applicant Name	Federal Grant funds	Non-Federal Match		Total
NOTE: All costs reflect first year of project implementation				
Personnel	Federal Grant	Applicant	Other	
Staff salary #1 Project management, etc., etc. (XXX hours @ XXX/hour)	\$51,100			\$51,100
Staff salary #2 GIS coordinator, etc., etc. (XXX hours @ XXX/hour)	\$20,400	\$25,000		\$45,400
Staff salary #3 Grant administration (XXX hours @ XXX/hour)		\$ 5,800		\$5,800
Town of USA Staff time for site mapping and inspection 120 hours @ \$50/hour			\$6,000	\$6,000
Total Salary	\$71,500	\$30,800	\$6,000	\$108,300
Fringe				
Staff #1 (36% of personnel)	\$18,396			\$18,396
Staff #2 (36% of personnel)	\$7,344			\$7,344
Town (29% of personnel)			\$1,740	\$1,740
Total Fringe	\$25,740	\$0	\$1,740	\$27,480
Total Salary and Fringe	\$97,240	\$30,800	\$7,740	\$135,780
Supplies				
	\$3,900			\$3,900
Total Supplies	\$3,900			\$3,900
Travel				
Travel (regional & local) XX local trips @ \$.58/mile @ 60 miles XX flights to national mtgs @ \$650 each	\$3,000			\$3,000

XX per diem and hotel @ \$XX				
Total Travel	\$ 3,000			\$ 3,000
Equipment				
			\$0	\$0
Total Equipment	\$0		\$0	\$0
Contractual				
ABC Finance Financial consultation XX hours @ \$x per hour	\$2,450			\$2,450
Multiple Consultants (TBD) Expert Services (estimate)	\$850,000		\$5,000	\$855,000
Total Contractual	\$852,450		\$ 5,000	\$857,450
Other				
Subawards (anticipated)	\$150,000	\$	\$37,500	\$187,500
Printing/Production	\$ 8,000	\$ 2,000		\$ 10,000
Postage		\$ 1,200		\$ 1,200
Telephone/Internet/IT Support	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,000		\$ 7,000
Total Other	\$162,000	\$6,200	\$37,500	\$205,700
Total Direct Costs	\$1,114,690	\$37,000	\$50,240	\$1,201,930
Indirect Costs				
Indirect (25% Direct Cost)	\$301,483			\$301,483
Unrecovered Indirect (Cost Rate 18%)		\$200,644		
Total Indirect Costs	\$301,483	\$0	\$0	\$301,483
Total Federal Request	\$1,416,173			\$1,416,173
Total Non-Federal Match		\$237,644	\$50,240	\$287,880
Total Application	\$1,416,173			\$1,704,053