

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: “OFFICE OF LAND AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (OLEM) PROGRAM TRIBAL SUPPORT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS”

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA) - Questions and Answers.

RFP NO: EPA-OLEM-OCPA-19-04

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.804

SUMMARY: The following are formal Agency responses to questions/comments received regarding the subject solicitation.

- 1. In reviewing the previous solicitation (EPA-OSWER-IPCO-14-03), it appears that in the description of the Project Two option for proposal submission, there was a change from the funding focus being for “...research, training, and technical assistance...” to what’s included in this year’s solicitation (EPA-OLEM-OCPA-19-04) “the recipient will conduct research to identify Superfund issues....”**

Is it EPA’s intent to limit the focus to research specifically in the Project Two area or will the other components of training and technical assistance also be funded through this area?

Response:

In the previous solicitation supporting OLEM’s tribal program (EPA-OSWER-IPCO-14-03), Project 2 activities were funded under both CERCLA 311(b) and 311(c). In this solicitation (EPA-OLEM-OCPA-19-04), Project 2 activities will only be funded under CERCLA 311(c) because EPA felt that it more accurately reflected our interest in building broad tribal capacity in the Superfund program. We were also able to eliminate the cost share required under CERCLA 311(b).

As noted on page 12 of the RFA, CERCLA 311(c) funds “must be used for research with respect to the detection, assessment, and evaluation of the effects on and risks to human health of hazardous substances and detection of hazardous substances in the environment.” The RFA notes that “funding is available to provide research assistance to help tribes better understand, evaluate and respond to risks from hazardous substances in Indian country.”

Training and technical assistance are not allowable activities under CERCLA 311(c) research authority except as provided by 2 CFR 200.87 for “activities involving the training of individuals in research techniques where such activities utilize the same facilities as other research and development activities and where such activities are not included in the instruction function.”

It is important to note, however, that on page 13 of the RFA, EPA explains “As provided at 2 CFR 200.87 “Research” means all research activities, both basic and applied...EPA has interpreted “research” under CERCLA §311(c) to include study and dissemination of information that extends to socioeconomic, institutional, and public policy issues, as well as the natural sciences.”

On pages 9-12, EPA requests that, in addition to conducting research on tribal needs and priorities in the Superfund program, the applicant develop a plan to “develop research products that reflect research conclusions and disseminate results”. The applicant has flexibility in creating a plan to develop research products, including “resources and tools”, and the mechanisms for disseminating results. On page 10, EPA lists several possible mechanisms for sharing research results and products, including:

- Online information (website)
- Webinars
- Tools and resources
- Case studies
- Sessions at the TLEF
- Conference calls
- In-person meetings

2. I am unable to find exactly where questions and answer regarding the RFA are posted. Would it be possible to provide more direction for finding answers when they become available?

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail or electronic mail to the Agency Contact listed in Section 7 of the RFP. Answers will be posted to the OLEM Grants & Funding webpage located at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/office-land-and-emergency-management-program-tribal-support-cooperative-agreements>, bi-weekly, until the closing date for this announcement.