

U.S. EPA Community-Scale Air Toxics Monitoring Request for Applications
EPA-OAR-OAQPS-20-05
Questions and Answers
As of **February 21, 2020**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting applications for funding for air toxics monitoring projects under the Community-Scale Air Toxics Ambient Monitoring grants competition (EPA-OAR-OAQPS-20-05). As part of the Agency's mission to protect human and environmental health, EPA periodically awards these grants to help state, tribal and local air agencies conduct air quality monitoring projects to better understand air toxics in their communities.

The Request for Application and all application forms are available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/search-opportunity-package.html>. Search for Funding Opportunity Number EPA-OAR-OAQPS-20-05. The deadline to apply is March 30, 2020.

Questions at time of posting (February 13, 2020) – *Questions added after posting begin on page 4*

What are air toxics?

Air toxics, also called hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), are pollutants known to, or suspected to, cause cancer and other serious health effects. The Clean Air Act lists 187 different air toxics.

What are community-scale air toxics ambient monitoring grants?

EPA provides community-scale air toxics ambient monitoring grants to assist eligible state, tribal, and local air agencies that want to conduct monitoring and analysis to identify, or more accurately define the extent of, the impact of air toxics in their communities. The Clean Air Act lists 187 different air toxics, which also are called "hazardous air pollutants" or HAPs. Unlike widespread pollutants such as ozone or particulate matter, air toxics tend to vary from community to community, based on the mix of industrial sources and motor vehicles in each.

Where does the grant money come from, and how much is available?

Funding for the grants comes from State and Tribal Assistance (STAG) funding. Congress appropriates STAG funds for states and tribes to use in implementing and maintaining environmental programs. EPA anticipates awarding a total of up to \$5 million during the 2020 calendar year. Individual grants cannot exceed \$750,000.

Who may apply?

Recipients of the grants must be air pollution control agencies that: 1) meet the definition of "air pollution control agency" in Section 302(b) of the Clean Air Act; and that, 2) are eligible to receive grants under Section 105 of the Clean Air Act. This generally means state air agencies, certain local air pollution agencies, and tribal air agencies.

Can my community organization apply?

Only state, tribal, and local air agencies can receive the grants under this competition. However, air agencies may partner with an outside organization on the monitoring projects funded by the grants. They also may use grant money to provide “sub-grants” to an outside organization who is otherwise not eligible to apply for a grant under this competition. These are referred to as “subawards” in the application document.

What types of projects will the grants fund?

EPA is accepting grant applications for projects that fall in to four categories:

- 1) Characterizing the impacts of air toxics in a community (community-scale monitoring);
- 2) Assessing the impacts of air toxics emissions from specific sources (near-source monitoring);
- 3) Evaluating new and emerging testing methods for air toxics; and
- 4) Analyzing existing air toxics data and developing or enhancing analytical, modeling and/or implementation tools (such as combining different data sets for deeper analysis and model improvement).

How many grants will be awarded?

EPA anticipates awarding 10 to 20 grants in calendar year 2020, depending on available funding and the quality of the applications the Agency receives. EPA is making this estimate based on the amount of money available and our experience from past grant competitions.

How will EPA decide which projects to fund?

Projects will be evaluated based on seven criteria: project summary and approach; environmental results; programmatic capability and past performance; budget; expenditure of awarded grant funds; leveraging of additional funds/resources; and community benefits, engagement and partnerships. EPA also may consider Agency priorities and geographic diversity in selecting grant recipients. See Section V. of the RFA beginning on page 21.

Can the grants be used to pay for existing or past air toxics monitoring?

The grants are for new monitoring projects only.

Do monitoring projects need to address particular air toxics to be eligible?

While grant applications may address any individual or suite of air toxic pollutants, air toxics of particular interest to EPA in this grant competition include ethylene oxide, chloroprene, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, and metals such as hexavalent chromium, nickel and arsenic.

What is the deadline to apply?

The deadline for submitting applications is March 30, 2020. Note: EPA asks applicants to notify the Agency via email by March 4, 2020, that they are planning to apply within one month after the RFA opens. The notification should go to Nealson Watkins (watkins.nealson@epa.gov). Instructions for making this notification are in the Request for Applications on page 1.

When will my Agency find out if we will receive a grant?

EPA anticipates notifying applicants within about 60 days of the application deadline if they have been recommended to receive a grant. This notification will be sent to the person who signs the application or to the project contact listed in the application. The official notification of an award will be made by EPA's Grants and Interagency Agreements Management Division.

My state has applied for these grants before. Is there anything new in the process?

EPA urges applicants to thoroughly read the Request for Application to ensure you include everything that is required for your application (see Section III.C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria beginning on page 15 and Section IV.C. Content of Application Package beginning on page 17 of the RFA). For example, this year's applications must include a statement on quality assurance; in previous grant competitions, quality assurance was addressed in project plans after grants were awarded.

If EPA is awarding the grants during calendar year 2020, that means grants could occur in two different federal fiscal years. Does that mean I will have to apply again later this year?

No. EPA may award money during both fiscal years from the set of applications the Agency receives in response to the Request for Applications.

Does my agency have to provide matching funds?

Matching is not required; however, leveraging is one of the criteria EPA uses to evaluate applications. This can include funds and other resources leveraged from state, tribal or local government, businesses and other nongovernmental organizations as appropriate. Instructions on providing information on leverage are included in the Request for Application.

Where I can I get the application forms?

The Request for Applications, along with all application forms and the ability to apply, is available at Grants.gov. You can find the full package at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/search-opportunity-package.html> and search for Funding Opportunity Number EPA-OAR-OAQPS-20-05.

Questions Added After Posting (as of February 21, 2020)

Question 1 (2/14/2020):

Is a local health department eligible to apply for a grant under this competition?

Answer 1:

A local health department may be eligible to apply for a grant under this competition if it meets the definition of an “air pollution control agency” from the Clean Air Act and has the responsibility for enforcing ordinances or laws relating to the prevention and control of air pollution. Note that the RFA does not require entities to currently have a Section 105 grant.

From page 13 of the RFA (Section III.A.):

“...the only entities eligible to submit applications under this announcement are air pollution control agencies, as defined by Section 302(b) of the Clean Air Act (CAA), that are also eligible to receive grants under Section 105 of the Clean Air Act.”

Per the Clean Air Act, Section 302:

(b) The term "air pollution control agency" means any of the following:

- (1) A single State agency designated by the Governor of that State as the official State air pollution control agency for purposes of this chapter.
- (2) An agency established by two or more States and having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the prevention and control of air pollution.
- (3) A city, county, or other local government health authority, or, in the case of any city, county, or other local government in which there is an agency other than the health authority charged with responsibility for enforcing ordinances or laws relating to the prevention and control of air pollution, such other agency.
- (4) An agency of two or more municipalities located in the same State or in different States and having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the prevention and control of air pollution.
- (5) An agency of an Indian tribe.

Question 1.a. (2/20/2020):

Are tribes that do not have approval for Treatment as a State (TAS) for purposes of carrying out air program eligible to apply for a grant under the community-scale air toxics competition?

Answer 1.a:

A tribe does not have to have TAS to be eligible. A tribe may be eligible to apply for a grant under this competition if it meets the definition of an “air pollution control agency” from the Clean Air Act and has the responsibility for enforcing ordinances or laws relating to the prevention and control of air pollution. We also will note that the RFA (<https://www.epa.gov/grants/community-scale-air-toxics-ambient-monitoring>) does not require entities to currently have a Section 105 grant. See answer 1. directly above.