

## **APPENDIX B: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Announcement No: EPA-R9-AIR6-10-005**

#### **Indoor Environments: Reducing Public Exposure to Indoor Pollutants**

*NOTE: This FAQ does not address all components of the RFP.*

**1) Q. Who can I contact for additional information?**

A. Mr. Shelly Rosenblum; email: [Rosenblum.Shelly@epa.gov](mailto:Rosenblum.Shelly@epa.gov), or Barbara Spark: [spark.barbara@epa.gov](mailto:spark.barbara@epa.gov). Please note that in accordance with EPA's Competition Policy of January 11, 2005 (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA may respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. EPA cannot discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria.

**2) Q. Can proposals be sent to Barbara Spark via hard copy or grants.gov?**

A. No. Barbara Spark can only be contacted for additional information. This is to provide a contact in case Shelly Rosenblum is not available to provide additional information.

**3) Q. This 2010 Indoor Air RFP looks very similar to your 2009 RFP. Can you highlight the major changes in instructions?**

A. Changes exist in some of the "grants rule" language, as well as program-specific contents. Here is a list of primary changes in grants language:

- Second year funding is contingent on EPA funds available for second year
- Mode of submission (use of Grants.gov instead of e-mail)
- Size of awards
- Leveraging instructions and evaluation criteria
- Cost-sharing instructions
- Evaluation criteria: the criterion for needs assessment has been dropped; the language for underserved communities (environmental justice) has been changed.
- Scalability option is not described, and total pages exclude extra narrative and budget page for "scalability" are not permitted.

(See Q&A #25, below, for primary program-specific changes)

**4) Q. The amount of funds available this year is double those from your last RFP. Has your region received additional funding for these grants?**

A. No. We have not received additional funding. Instead, we are seeking to award both this year's and next year's funds in a single RFP.

**5) Q. Can you guarantee that the funds will be available in the second year?**

A. No. Please read the conditions in RFP Section II, Award Information. This is the first time that we have done it in the Region 9 Indoor Air RFP.

**6) Q. Will there be a Region 9 Indoor Air RFP next year?**

A. Since we will be incrementally funding this year's grants and cooperative agreements, that is, making awards which are expected to cover the following year's available grant funds, there may be no need for an RFP next year. However, we might issue a new RFP if additional funds become available.

- 7) **Q. Our organization has a Region 9 Indoor Air grant or cooperative agreement which will not end until November, 2011. Can we apply for funding in a different priority area, or a different project?**  
A. Yes.
- 8) **Q. What constitutes a “different project?”**  
A. The project will be done somewhere else, reach a different set of people with asthma, different schools, etc., in other words, a new target group.
- 9) **Q. Is an organization allowed to submit more than one proposal, if they are for different projects?**  
A. Yes, an organization is allowed to submit more than one proposal as long as the additional proposal is for a different priority project area.
- 10) **Q. Can we include more than one priority area in our project?**  
A. Yes. This could be an innovative approach. The concept proposal should show how the different priority areas are linked in the project.
- 11) **Q. Why are the pages documenting “Past Performance” and “Programmatic Capability” not counted toward the concept proposal page limit?**  
A. This requirement could differentially affect applicants. If your response to this requirement would put you over the page limit, you should respond in a clearly identified attachment, and indicate in your narrative that this is where you have placed your response.
- 12) **Q. Is there a cost sharing or match requirement?**  
A. There is no cost sharing requirement. However, there is a leveraging criterion in Section V. A. of the RFP (Evaluation Criteria).
- 13) **Q. What is “leveraging?”**  
A. Leveraging is generally when an applicant proposes to provide its own additional funds/resources or those from third party sources to support or complement the project they are awarded under the competition which are above and beyond the EPA assistance awarded. Any leveraged funds/resources, and their source, must be identified in the proposal (see Section IV). Leveraged funds and resources may take various forms as noted at length in RFP Section III.B.
- 14) **Q. Is there a time period for how long we should be able to sustain a project?**  
A. There is no specific time period for how long the project should continue after the grant has ended. This links to the following: Under Section V.A. Evaluation Criteria (Project Sustainability and Replication), “when EPA funding concludes, what is the likelihood that project can continue?”
- 15) **Q. Is it required to use the Outputs/Outcomes Tables in our proposal?**  
A. While the table format is not mandatory, you may find that it is the easiest way to fulfill the requirement that you have described the activities, outputs and environmental outcomes aimed at achieving environmental results.
- 16) **Q. Would a project utilizing EPA’ *Healthy Schools Environmental Assessment Tool (Healthy SEAT)* accomplish EPA’s goal of “all schools using IAQ Tools for Schools, or**

**comparable IAQ practices, to ensure a strong IAQ management plan and subsequent improved IAQ in schools?”**

A. EPA’s “Healthy SEAT” is **not** a substitute for the day-to-day vigilance and good practice that is necessary at every school to manage effectively environmental, health and safety issues in a manner that protects children, staff and the environment at all times. “Healthy SEAT” is software tool to help school districts establish and manage comprehensive school facility self-assessment programs. Among its options is an indoor air assessment checklist, which recommends that the district assessor make sure that each school has an IAQ coordinator, an IAQ profile and management plan, and records of ventilation system inspections. However, ensuring that IAQ is protected requires that school staff implement an IAQ management plan on an on-going basis, and that attention is paid on a daily basis to all activities in the school that may impact indoor air quality. This daily school-level vigilance is also essential to protect students and staff from many other potential problems, including chemical hazards, pest infestations, and water problems that may cause mold, to name only a few. (See: <http://www.epa.gov/schools/healthyseat/frequentquestions.htm>)

**17) Q. What supplies are allowable or not allowable under this program?**

A. EPA funds can only be used for environmental (not medical) purposes. This prohibition includes asthma supplies such as spacers, peak flow meters, nebulizers, etc., but *not* appropriate environmental mitigation supplies. Additionally, EPA funds may not be used for “incentives,” such as t-shirts, pencils, etc. See Section IV. Elements of the Concept Proposal G: Budget/Supplies

**18) Q. When will the project period begin under these awards?**

A. Our goal is to begin the project approximately in March , 2011.

**19) Q. What will happen after my proposal is selected?**

A. If you are selected, you will be receiving a grant guidance letter instructing you on how to prepare the final application. There may need to be negotiations about your final work plan, budget, and deliverables.

**20) Q. Can funding be used to acquire services?**

A. Funding may be used to acquire services, provided the recipient follows procurement procedures contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as applicable.

**21) Q. Will EPA consider partial funding for projects?**

A. Yes. EPA reserves the right to partially-fund proposals by funding discrete activities, projects, or phases of proposed proposals. If EPA decides to partially fund proposals, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and the evaluation/selection process.

**22) Q. In the Evaluation Criteria, it says “applicants with no relevant or available past performance or reporting history will receive a ‘neutral score’ for this factor.” What is meant by a “neutral score?”**

A. A “neutral score” is considered to 50% of the available points for the factor.

**23) Q. In “threshold eligibility criterion” #9, it states: “Proposals for Managing Indoor Air Quality in Schools must include a written letter of commitment from an upper level school district official who has the authority to assure that the project will move**

**forward. This will generally be a Superintendent, or Associate, Assistant, or Deputy Superintendent. This letter is required from each district where the project will take place. In the case of independent, private or parochial schools, the letter of commitment should come from comparable upper school administration.” Does this mean that we need to get a letter from the Principal of each school where the project will be conducted?**

A. It is not necessary to provide a letter of commitment from each Principal in a school district where an upper district official has authorized your project. This criterion recognizes that these projects may take place at private schools or other K-12 schools independent of the authority of central administration at a school district. In such cases, the highest level of administration with the authority to assure that the project will go forward may have a title other than Superintendent, Associate, Assistant or Deputy Superintendent.

**24) Q. For proposals for Managing Indoor Air Quality in Schools, is it a requirement that the letter of commitment from upper administration include a statement that the district will create a sustainability plan to institutionalize its IAQ Management Plan?**

A. This is not a requirement. However, “sustainability” is awarded points in the Evaluation Criteria, and such a statement will be taken into consideration in the evaluation.

**25) Q. This 2010 Indoor Air RFP looks very similar to your 2009 RFP. Can you highlight the major changes in program language?**

A. Primary changes in program-specific language are as follows:

- For indoor air management in schools, an increased emphasis on educating teachers about managing asthma triggers in their classrooms.
- For indoor air management in schools, an increased emphasis on sustainability plans.
- For indoor asthma trigger education for children in schools, clarification that this is for children in elementary schools.

**26) Q. If we have an existing project that we want to expand to a new target group is this eligible?**

A. Yes.

**27) Q. Can projects include research?**

A. If the applicant needs to gather information or generate data to support or inform outreach, conducting it may be eligible. Projects that are solely focused on research are not eligible for funding.

**28) Q. Will EPA fund proposals to repair buildings in schools?**

A. EPA is not authorized to fund the repair of school buildings under Section 103 of the Clean Air Act. Applicant should outline the methodology they will use in addressing IAQ in schools. EPA’s authority extends to outreach, education, and demonstration projects only.

**29) Q. Can grant funds be used to mitigate homes?**

A. Mitigation is acceptable under the authority for this grant to the extent that it is done as a way to teach occupants how to clean-up and/or prevent indoor environmental triggers of asthma in their home.

**30) Q. What exactly do you mean by “health professionals trained” as an output for indoor environmental triggers for asthma?**

A. The term “health professional” indicates someone who has received a health care degree, license, certification or credential, but can also include students in the health professions, such as respiratory therapy, nursing and medical students. Asthma “training” should include a meaningful component on asthma triggers, involve a formal or informal presentation (not just distributing educational materials at an event), and should be at least the length of a 45-50 minute conference session. Outputs not meeting these criteria should be reported using other descriptors.

**31) Q. What constitutes a “meaningful component” on indoor environmental asthma triggers in a conference session-length presentation to health professionals?**

A. Education on indoor environmental asthma triggers and their integration into comprehensive asthma care should be the purpose of the presentation and make up most of it. A presentation which provides an introduction to asthma and includes just a small number of slides on indoor asthma triggers does not meet this definition.

**32) Q. We will be providing training on indoor environmental asthma triggers to community health workers, or “promotoras.” How should we categorize these?**

A. Outputs related to community health workers such as promotoras, or “peers,” can be described as such, apart from “health professionals trained.”