

1. Which company is submitting this grant?
2. Is this company SAM Registered?

A. Eligible Applicants

Based on Section 1459A of the SDWA, eligible applicants under this competition include the following:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ IDENTIFY

- a public water system;
- a water system located in an area governed by an Indian Tribe;<sup>1</sup> or
- a State, on behalf of an underserved community;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The term "State" as defined in Section 1401(13)(A) of the

SDWA, includes, in addition to the several States, only the District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

AND

(2) serves a community— \_\_\_\_\_ IDENTIFY WHICH

(A) that is underserved; and

(B) that, under affordability criteria established by the State under SDWA section 1452(d)(3), is determined by the State to be a disadvantaged community; or

(C) with a population of less than 10,000 individuals. (need this data)

Consistent with Section 1459A(d) of the SDWA, EPA is limiting eligibility under this grant program to projects that benefit underserved communities. For the purposes of this grant program and RFA, *an underserved community is defined by Section 1459A(a) of SDWA as one that does not have access to household drinking water or wastewater services or is served by a public water system that violates or exceeds a requirement of a NPDWR, including a maximum contaminant level, a treatment technique, or action level.* The NPDWRs are legally enforceable primary standards and treatment techniques that apply to public water systems. Information on the NPDWRs are available at

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/national-primary-drinking-water-regulations>

In addition, consistent with Section 1459A(c) of the SDWA, projects must also serve disadvantaged communities or communities with a population of less than 10,000 individuals.

Each state establishes affordability criteria under Section 1452(d)(3) of the SDWA, and a disadvantaged community is defined as "the service area of a public water system that meets affordability criteria

**Mandatory Documents:**

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Project Narrative, prepared as described in Section IV.E.2.
6. Documentation prepared by a Federal, State, regional, or local government agency of the natural hazard risk to the area where the proposed program or project is to be located (Project Narrative Attachment Form) - not included in the 15-page Project Narrative page limitation

**Optional Documents:**

7. Other Attachments Form – Biographical Sketches
8. Other Attachments Form – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable
9. Other Attachments Form – Supporting documentation demonstrating readiness to proceed, such as permits, easements, rights-of-way, and relocations necessary to carry out the project or activity

established after public review and comment by the State in which the public water system is located.” More information about a state’s affordability criteria can be found in a state’s most current final Intended Use Plan or by contacting the state Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program; state contact information is available at <https://www.epa.gov/dwsrf/state-dwsrf-website-and-contacts>.

For applicants that do not have established affordability criteria under Section 1452(d)(3) of SDWA, such as territories, to be eligible for this RFA, projects must serve underserved communities, per SDWA section 1459A(a), that are communities of less than 10,000 individuals that lack the capacity to incur debt sufficient to finance a project or activity, per SDWA section 1459A(c)(2)(B).

To be eligible applicants for this RFA, public water systems serving tribes must have projects that serve communities that meet the definition of “underserved” in SDWA section 1459A(a) and meet the definition of “small” in SDWA section 1459A(c)(2)(B) (i.e., have a population of less than 10,000 individuals and lack the capacity to incur debt sufficient to finance the project). Public water systems serving tribes do not have to serve communities that meet the criteria for disadvantaged communities in Section 1459A(c)(2)(A) to be eligible applicants for this RFA.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching (N/A)

A non-federal cost share or match is not required. EPA is applying an adjustment waiver to all grant applicants of the statutory cost share for this RFA to increase access to this funding opportunity to eligible groups. EPA intends to exercise its discretion, as allowed for in the statute creating this grant program, to waive cost share for this RFA for all applicants. Future RFAs may require a cost share.

### C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., B., and C. to be considered eligible. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement at the time of application submission.
2. Applications must address one, and only one, of the two National Priority Areas listed in Section I.C. Eligible applicants may submit more than one application under this competition as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses only one National Priority Area. Applications that address more than one National Priority Area in a single application will not be reviewed.
3. Applications for awards under National Priority Area 1 cannot exceed \$5,700,000 in federal funds; and applications for awards under National Priority Area 2 cannot exceed \$13,300,000 in federal funds. Applications exceeding the amount for the National Priority Area it addresses will be rejected.
4. Applications must address at least one program or project for increasing drinking water system resilience to natural hazards as described in Section I.C. Funding must be used for

the planning, design, construction, implementation, operation, or maintenance of a program or project that increases resilience of drinking water systems to natural hazards.

5. Applications must include a description of the natural hazard risk(s) to be addressed by the proposed program or project.

6. Applications must include documentation prepared by a Federal, State, regional, or local government agency of the natural hazard risk to the area where the proposed program or project is to be located (e.g., evidence of a disaster declaration, local government planning document, flood map, or earthquake hazard map).

7. Applications must include a description, including date(s), of any recent natural hazard events, if applicable, that have affected the water system. Applicants that have not experienced a recent natural hazard event must indicate that in the application.

8. Applications must include a description of how the proposed program or project would improve the performance of the public water system under the anticipated natural hazards.

9. Applications must include a description of how the proposed program or project is expected to enhance the resilience of the system to the anticipated natural hazards.

10. Applications must demonstrate that proposed projects will occur in underserved communities that are disadvantaged communities or communities with a population of less than 10,000 individuals as required under section SDWA Section 1459(a). Section 1459A(a) of the SDWA defines an underserved community as one that does not have access to household drinking water or wastewater services, or is served by a public water system that violates or exceeds a requirement of a NPDWR, including a maximum contaminant level, a treatment technique, or action level. Each state establishes affordability criteria under section 1452(d)(3) of the SDWA, and a disadvantaged community is defined as “the service area of a public water system that meets affordability criteria established after public review and comment by the State in which the public water system is located.” The affordability criteria must be met for the community for which the project will be performed. Applicants must include their state’s affordability criteria and how the proposed project meets the affordability criteria. Applicants can obtain more information about their state’s affordability criteria in their state’s most current final Intended Use Plan or contacting their state Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program for more information.

11. 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. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.E.2 with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.E.2 establishes a 15-page, single-spaced Project Narrative page limit. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.

12. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of

submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Grants.gov requires an active SAM.gov registration in order to initiate the application submission process. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

13. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with Grants.gov or 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 submission outside of Grants.gov.

14. If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

### **E. Content of Application Package Submission**

Applicants should read the following section very carefully. A complete application package must include the following documents described below.

#### **1. Application Materials**

a. Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance. Complete the form.

b. SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs. Complete the form.

The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package. In Section B, Budget Categories column (1) should be filled out for federal funds, column (2) should be filled out for non-federal cost- share/match if any, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (combined federal funds and any non-federal cost-share/match).

c. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54. Complete the form. Attach additional forms as needed.

d. EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report. Complete the form. There are no attachments.

e. Project Narrative. See Section IV.E.2 (Project Narrative) for details on specific information that must be included. Applicants should refer to Section I.B of the announcement which provides a project description and example eligible activities.

f. Biographical Sketches. Submit a biographical sketch of each major project manager, support staff member, or other major project participant (see Section IV.D).

g. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if indirect costs are included in your proposed project budget). Complete this form if indirect costs are included in the proposed project budget. You must submit a copy of your organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed project budget includes indirect costs.

- h. Supporting documentation demonstrating readiness to proceed Submit documentation, as applicable, pertaining to the scope of planning efforts, including any permits, land, easements, rights-of-way, and relocations necessary to carry out the project or activity.
- i. Documentation of the known natural hazard Submit documentation prepared by a Federal, State, regional, or local government agency of the natural hazard risk to the area where the proposed program or project is to be located.

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## 2. Project Narrative

NOTE: The Project Narrative must include sections a-c below. The Project Narrative (covering sections a-c below) is limited to no more than fifteen (15) typewritten, single spaced 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper) including the cover page and executive summary. Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the Project Narrative. Additional pages beyond the 15-page limit will not be considered. The following documents do not count towards the 15-page Project Narrative limitation. These include, as mentioned in Section IV.E.1, parts f. through i (f. Biographical Sketches, g. Negotiated Indirect Rate Cost Agreement, h. Supporting documentation demonstrating readiness to proceed, and i. Supporting documentation of the known natural hazard). The application's Project Narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the Project Narrative.

### a. Cover Page (included in the page limit)

1. Project title;
2. National Priority Area from Section I.B addressed in the application (applicants must address only one National Priority Area per application package);
3. Short 2-3 sentence description of the proposed program or project with identification of the natural hazard risk to be addressed
4. Eligible program or project from Section I.B addressed in the application;
5. Name of applicant;
6. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number); and
7. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested).

b. Executive Summary: Provide a brief summary of the proposed project (should not exceed one page). This should include a brief description of the proposed project and the anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes.

c. Workplan: The workplan must address the following elements:

#### 1. Project Description:

Describe your approach for increasing drinking water system resilience to natural hazards in an underserved community and community that is a disadvantaged community or a community with a population of less than 10,000 individuals, through one or more of the eligible programs or projects described in this announcement (see Sections I.B and I.C).

Provide details of how the community served meets the underserved criteria and is also disadvantaged or has a population of less than 10,000 individuals. Describe the program or project to be planned, designed, constructed, implemented, operated, or maintained and the natural hazard risk to be addressed, and if there have been any recent natural hazard events that have affected the system. Explain how the project supports improving performance of the drinking water system and increasing resilience of drinking water systems to anticipated

natural hazards. Describe the approach to provide public education and conduct outreach. Describe how the proposed project supports environmental justice goals, benefits underserved, small and disadvantaged community(ies), and supports the Justice40 Initiative.

## 2. Expeditious Project Readiness to Proceed:

Demonstrate that the project will be ready to proceed expeditiously upon award of funding. Describe past and current practices being implemented to increase the resilience to natural hazards of public water systems. Describe the completed project planning and design phases if relevant. As appropriate, demonstrate that any land, easements, rights-of-way, and relocations necessary to carry out the project or activity have been obtained. Submission of supporting documentation demonstrating this readiness to proceed may be included as optional attachments and are not subject to the Project Narrative page limitation.

## 3. Environmental Results and Measuring Progress:

- a. Stated Objective/Link to EPA's Strategic Plan - List the objective of the project and the linkage to EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities, Objective 5.1: Ensure Safe Drinking Water and Reliable Water Infrastructure (see Section I.D of this announcement).
- b. Results of Activities (Outputs) - Describe the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and describe an approach for tracking and reporting your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).
- c. Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements that will be accomplished as a result of the project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment or public health which are a result of the accomplishment of the work plan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking and reporting progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement).

4. Milestone Schedule: Provide a projected milestone schedule for the proposed project period (one to four years). The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks and an approach for ensuring that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant.

5. Detailed Budget Narrative: Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF-424A such as "other" and

“contractual.” Please see EPA’s Budget Development Guidance which includes a sample budget.

a. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs and total cost. All subgrant funding should be located in the “other” cost category. Total costs must include both federal and any non-federal funds; indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by EPA and what portion of the cost will be paid with non-federal funds, if any. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the allowability of costs for each project component/task, as well as the cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of all costs.

6. Programmatic Capability/Experience:

a. Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of your organization and experience related to the proposed project, and your organization’s infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.

b. Staff Expertise/Qualifications - Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their experience/expertise/qualifications, cultural competency, knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project, including demonstrated knowledge of state and local regulations and policies relevant to the program or project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). A biographical sketch must be submitted for each major project manager, support staff member or other major project participant. Biographical sketches are not counted in the page limit. Full resumes may be included as an appendix to the application narrative and are not counted in the page limit.

7. Past Performance: Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements if previously awarded) and:

a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.

b. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.

c. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

Note: In evaluating an applicant’s past performance, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and/or from current and prior federal agency 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 information, please indicate this in the application, and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. Failure to provide any programmatic past performance or reporting information, or to include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available

past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see also Section V).

8. Documentation of the known natural hazard (not included in the 15-page Project Narrative page limitation): Submit documentation prepared by a Federal, State, regional, or local government agency of the natural hazard risk to the area where the proposed program or project is to be located. Examples of documentation include, but are not limited to, evidence of a disaster declaration, local government hazard mitigation planning document, FEMA flood map, Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, or USGS earthquake hazard map. This documentation is to be submitted separately using a Project Narrative Attachment form. The documentation is not subject to the Project Narrative page limitations specified for the application.

9. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (not included in the Project Narrative work plan page limit):

Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) (not included in the page limit) – If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) of this announcement for additional information.)

Note: The applicant should also provide in the Project Narrative any additional information, to the extent not already addressed above, that addresses the selection criteria in Section V.

d. Submission Dates and Times

Applications submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be received by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time, November 6, 2023. Late applications will not be considered for funding.