

Questions & Answers
Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools
(EPA-R-OAR-APS-24-02)

Last updated **March 12, 2024**.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting applications for the Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools competition (EPA-R-OAR-APS-24-02) until the deadline of **March 19, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. (ET)**. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) can be found [here](#).

This Q&A document includes questions submitted to IAQSchools@epa.gov by the March 5 Q&A deadline and questions asked during the information session webinars.

Please review all Q&As below and the NOFO. Questions marked **NEW** or **UPDATED** have been added or revised since the last posting of the questions and answers document.

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1. General Questions

1.1: What is the Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools?

Answer: This grant program was authorized under Section 60106 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which provides funding “for grants and other activities to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other air pollutants at schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities under subsections (a) through (c) of section 103 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7403(a)–(c)) and section 105 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 7405).” The grant program solicits applications from Tribes, states, territories, local governments/educational agencies, and nonprofit organizations to enable more low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) schools and/or school districts across [rural, suburban, and/or urban areas](#) to monitor and reduce GHG emissions and indoor air pollutants through the development and adoption of comprehensive indoor air quality (IAQ) management plans consistent with EPA’s [IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit](#) and [Framework](#), [Energy Savings Plus Health Guidance](#), [Preventive Maintenance Guidance](#), and other EPA recommended IAQ best practices.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

1.2: How can potential grant applicants learn more?

Answer:

- Review the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) [here](#).
- Review the entries in this Q&A document that will be updated during the application period with inquiries submitted to IAQSchools@epa.gov and questions asked in the information session webinars.
- Register for and attend the information session webinars on January 25 and February 12. Recordings will be posted [here](#) after the webinar dates.
- Submit questions not addressed in the resources above to IAQSchools@epa.gov.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

1.3: When will grantees begin offering resources and assistance to schools and school districts?

Answer: The estimated project start date for the grants is October 2024, but the exact date when a particular grantee will be ready to engage with schools after the start date may vary. Grantees will be offering support to schools for up to five years.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

1.4: As this grant program does not fund infrastructure improvements in schools outside research and development projects, will grantees or EPA help connect schools and school districts with infrastructure funding opportunities?

Answer: The US Department of Energy grant and financing [website](#) provides links to a number of grant and financing options provided by state governments and the federal government.

The US Department of Education is also in the process of setting up a National Center for School Infrastructure program [here](#). Once the center is operational it will serve as a clearinghouse of resources for States and local educational agencies (LEAs) related to improving and developing safe, healthy, sustainable, and equitable public school infrastructure through public school infrastructure improvements, and provide technical assistance (TA) to Supporting America’s School Infrastructure (SASI) grantees and high-need LEAs seeking to leverage available resources to improve public school facilities for all students.

For additional Federal grant opportunities, search on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

For EPA indoor air technical assistance and other guidance materials for schools visit our [IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit website](#). The Action Kit shows schools how to carry out a practical plan to improve indoor air problems at little- or no-cost using straightforward activities and in-house staff. The Action Kit provides best

practices, industry guidelines, sample policies, and a sample IAQ management plan.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

1.5: Is there a list of schools located in low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal communities that can benefit from the work of grantees?

Answer: EPA does not have a list of schools, but Section I.C. of the NOFO provides guidance on identifying these schools using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) and/or EPA's EJScreen tool.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

1.6: How do you define "schools in Tribal communities" that may benefit from the work of grantees? Does it include schools operating on Tribal reservations, but not solely owned by the Tribe, or just schools solely owned and operated by the Tribe?

Answer: Section I.C. of the NOFO provides guidance on identifying these schools using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) and/or EPA's EJScreen tool.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

1.7: Are pre-k schools or colleges able to benefit from the work of grantees in this program or is it limited to K-12 schools in low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal communities?

Answer: Applicants will be evaluated based on their impact on K-12 schools in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities, but other schools may benefit from guidance materials developed by grantees.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

1.8: How is capacity building defined in this grant program?

Answer: Please review Section I.B. of the NOFO for descriptions and examples of capacity building.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

1.9: Are K-12 charter schools in low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal communities able to benefit from the work of grantees?

Answer: Yes.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

1.10: When describing an applicant's past experience working with low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal schools, should applicants use the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST) or [EJScreen](#) to identify past schools they have worked with?

Answer: Yes. For the purpose of identifying schools that applicants have worked with in the past, CEJST or EJScreen can be used to identify schools in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities per Section I.C. of the NOFO.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

1.11: How can applicants identify K-12 schools in Tribal communities?

Answer: Please refer to Section I.C. of the NOFO for guidance on identifying K-12 schools in Tribal communities using the CEJST and EJScreen tools.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

1.12: Is this funding opportunity concerned with greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in schools themselves or the reduction of upstream GHGs emissions resulting from energy efficiency improvements in schools?

Answer: GHG reduction projects under this funding opportunity should address the operation of the school building. The GHG emission reductions may be local (e.g., reduced natural gas consumption by a furnace at the school) or upstream (e.g., reduced electricity consumption).

Date Posted: 3/6/2024

2. Funding

2.1: How much funding does EPA plan to award in these grants?

Answer: The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately \$32,000,000. EPA anticipates awarding four to six grants of \$5,000,000 to \$8,000,000 to support five years of IAQ and GHG reduction activities. Grants will fund activities at the state, multi-state, regional, and national level. The final number and value of grants awarded through this NOFO will be subject to the availability of funds, the quality of applications received, the geographic distribution of proposed activities, and other applicable considerations.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

2.2: Is cost sharing required under this program?

Answer: No cost sharing, matching funds or leveraged resources are required as a condition of eligibility under this competition. Applicants intending to include cost sharing, matching funds, and/or leveraged resources in their application should review Section IV.C. Subsection 6 of the NOFO for additional guidance.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

2.3: Is there a Tribal set-aside for a specific amount of the grant funds or is there any other means that schools in Tribal communities are prioritized?

Answer: Tribal schools are prioritized through the environmental justice rating criteria, which provides significant weight to applications that prioritize Tribal schools and have past experience working in Tribal communities. In addition, a Tribal IAQ/GHG capacity building project area was included as one of the four grant project areas to help ensure that robust Tribal capacity building activities will be supported.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

2.4: Will funds be advanced to recipients at the start of the first quarter of the project period or will EPA hold funds for reimbursement?

Answer: EPA intends to disburse the full funding amount that a grantee is selected for at the start of the project period of performance. Grantees will draw down from that funding over the course of the period of performance as they incur expenses for eligible activities.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

2.5: Should grant funds be passed through to partner K-12 schools for the schools to purchase IAQ monitoring equipment and/or R&D IAQ-improving equipment directly, or should the EPA grant money be used to directly acquire equipment deployed at the partner schools? Is there a preference?

Answer: Grantees can pursue either option and should select the option that best ensures a successful project.

NEW *Date Posted: 3/12/2024*

2.6: Will the grant be issued as a fixed price award? If so, could a subrecipient have the same fixed price subaward?

Answer: No, the grants awarded under this competition are not fixed price awards. Applicants should review the budget detail description in Section IV of the NOFO for instructions on developing the budget narrative.

NEW *Date Posted: 3/12/2024*

3. Application Process

3.1: What is the optional *Notice of Intent to Apply* and how do I submit it?

Answer: To allow for efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests electronic submittal of an optional *Notice of Intent to Apply* by **February 22, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. (ET)** to IAQSchools@epa.gov. Submission of the *Notice of Intent to Apply* email (that announces an organization's intent to submit an application by providing a project title, project areas, the applicant's name, and the expected funding amount that will be requested) will help EPA anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted applications. Applicants are not required to submit an application in line with what

is proposed in their Notice of Intent to Apply, it is only for the purpose of assisting EPA in planning for the review of proposals.

Sample Notice of Intent to Apply:

To: IAQSchools@epa.gov

Subject: Notice of Intent to Apply: Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools

Email Body: [APPLICANT ORGANIZATION NAME] intends to submit an application requesting \$[FUNDING AMOUNT] to support activities in project areas [PROJECT AREAS] on or before the application due date of March 19, 2024. The project title is [PROJECT TITLE].

Date Updated: 1/23/2024

3.2: Can you provide guidance for completing the SF-424A and other required forms?

Answer: Instructions for EPA grantee forms, including the SF-424A, can be found here:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grantee-forms>. Applicants should also closely review Section IV. of the NOFO for instructions on how to apply.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

3.3: Where can I apply?

Answer: Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than

March 19, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) to be considered for funding. Applicants should review

Section IV.A. of the NOFO for instruction on registering for Grants.gov and SAM.gov, as well as [How to Register to Apply for Grants](#).

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

3.4: When are applications due?

Answer: Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than

March 19, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) to be considered for funding.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

3.5: Who do I contact if I am having technical issues with SAM.gov or Grants.gov? Can EPA provide support on this process?

Answer: Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm (ET).

Contact [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov to resolve technical issues with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). 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. The [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

SAM.gov is run by GSA and Grants.gov is run by HHS, so EPA cannot provide support for their systems.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

3.6: Does EPA offer to help organizations prepare grant applications?

Answer: EPA has selected 16 Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (EJ TCTACs) in partnership with the [U.S. Department of Energy](https://www.doe.gov) that will receive \$177 million to help underserved and overburdened communities across the country.

These centers will provide training and other assistance to build capacity for navigating federal grant application systems, developing strong grant proposals, and effectively managing grant funding. In addition,

these centers will provide guidance on community engagement, meeting facilitation, and translation and interpretation services for limited English-speaking participants, thus removing barriers and improving accessibility for communities with environmental justice concerns. Each of the technical assistance centers will also create and manage communication channels to ensure all communities have direct access to resources and information. Learn more or submit a request for assistance [here](#).

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

3.7: Do the budget table and the budget detail count towards the 10-page limit of the project narrative?

Answer: Yes. In the first publication of the NOFO, the text was inconsistent about whether the budget table and budget detail count towards the 10-page limit. The NOFO has since been revised to clarify that these two items are included in the 10-page limit. Another related change to the NOFO is that the reference to a “Budget Narrative” document has been removed from the list of mandatory documents in Section IV.B.

Date Posted: 1/29/2024

3.8: Should an applicant include identified partners’ past federally funded assistance agreements in the description of programmatic capability and past performance?

Answer: The Programmatic Capability and Past Performance section of an application is solely for the applicant organization.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

3.9: Are letters of support from potentially impacted school districts encouraged or allowed in addition to implementation partner letters?

Answer: Only partnership letters should be included. See Section IV.B. of the NOFO for guidance on application attachments like partnership letters.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

3.10: Is there a specific format for the optional biographies or CVs of staff members that may be included in an application package?

Answer: No.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

3.11: Are there more specific guidelines for application document formatting beyond the 10-page limit and selection of a legible font referenced in Section III.C. of the NOFO?

Answer: No.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

3.12: If an applicant intends to partner with other organizations (e.g., through subawards), do all organizations need to have a grants.gov and sam.gov account or does only the primary applicant organization need these accounts to apply?

Answer: Only the organization submitting the application needs to have a grants.gov and sam.gov account to apply.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

3.13: How do we reflect a layered funding approach that includes partner organizations and stipends to work groups in the budget?

Answer: Please review Section IV.C. Subsection 6 of the NOFO for guidance on completing your budget. Be sure to review the Budget Detail guidance, including the text on the Contractual part of the budget on pg. 43 of the NOFO. Here is an excerpt: “Contractual services (including consultant services) are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. [EPA’s Subaward Policy and supplemental Frequent Questions](#) has detailed guidance available for differentiating between contractors and subrecipients.”

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

3.14: Are references included in the 10-page limit for the project narrative?

Answer: Yes. References in the project narrative do count towards the 10-page limit. Please review Section IV.A. of the NOFO for guidance on application materials, including mandatory and optional documents.

Date Posted: 3/6/2024

3.15: The evaluation criteria table in Section V.A. of the NOFO lists “Programmatic Capability and Past Performance” as item 3 and “Environmental Justice, Low-Income, Disadvantaged, and Tribal Communities” as item 4. This is the reverse of the order for these items as listed under Section IV.C. What is EPA’s preference for the order of these two items in an applicant’s project narrative?

Answer: Applicants can include these items in either order in their project narrative. The descriptions in Section IV.C. and V.A. are consistent with each other even though they are in reverse order.

NEW *Date Posted:* 3/12/2024

4. Eligible Activities

4.1: Can a school district apply for funds to upgrade the HVAC and other infrastructure in their schools?

Answer: Grant funding from this NOFO **cannot** be used to make permanent improvements to school facilities, except for in K-12 schools that are research and demonstration project locations.

Note: Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

4.2: What are the eligible uses for the funding?

Answer: Eligible applicants may submit only one grant application to fund activities in two or more of the four project areas detailed in Section I.B. of the NOFO. Please review the NOFO for details.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

4.3: How can applicants incorporate the American Climate Corps into their proposal?

Answer: In September 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration [launched](#) the American Climate Corps (ACC) to increase workforce pathways for young people into environmental and climate careers. Applicants for this funding opportunity may incorporate the ACC into their proposal by creating service or training opportunities for young people, with an emphasis on those in disadvantaged communities, that advance the goals of this grant program to reduce GHG emissions and improve air quality in schools. For example, applicants could propose to hire a paid intern annually to assist with carrying out the activities of the grant, such as building relationships with schools, leading trainings, and planning events. Applicants may draw inspiration from existing AmeriCorps programs, which have a similar emphasis on training and service.

Note: To qualify as an ACC program, the program must provide youth with at least 300 hours of paid skills-based training and/or service. To recruit participants, applicants are encouraged to partner with organizations that serve young people in disadvantaged communities, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges, Minority Serving Institutions, community colleges, or other similar groups. Applicants proposing a program to be considered for the ACC should note that in their application, and applicants should identify compensation for Climate Corps participants in their budget.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

4.4: What activities are ineligible for funding?

Answer: Applicants are encouraged to review [RAIN-2019-G02, “Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance”](#) for further guidance on determining if a cost is eligible. The inclusion of ineligible activities may lead to a portion, or all of the application not being reviewed.

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. Activities must meet the following requirements to be eligible for funding:

- a. EPA will not consider activities that promote the use of air cleaning and energy efficiency technologies of unknown or unclear performance against indoor air pollutants and GHG reductions such as bipolar ionization, ozone generators, ionizing air cleaners, and oxidizing air cleaners. All tasks and activities must be supported by robust scientific evidence in peer-reviewed publications and be consistent with EPA’s [IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit](#) and [Framework, Energy Savings Plus Health Guidance](#), [Preventive Maintenance Guidance](#), and other EPA recommended IAQ best practices.
- b. Except for in demonstration projects, funding cannot be used to make permanent facility improvements.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

4.5: Is noise pollution an eligible form of air pollution to address in projects under this grant?

Answer: No, noise pollution is not an eligible form of air pollution.

Date Posted: 1/23/2024

4.6: The NOFO states that grants “will fund activities at the state, multi-state, regional, and national level.” How is “regional” defined in this context?

Answer: In the NOFO, the term “regional” is considered broader than the term “multi-state.” For example, regional activities might impact schools across the Midwest while multi-state activities in the same region might only include North and South Dakota.

Date Posted: 1/23/2024

4.7: Is radon an eligible form of air pollution to address in projects under this grant?

Answer: Yes.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.8: Is an application more competitive if it applies for more than two of the four project areas?

Answer: Please review Section V. of the NOFO for a description of the evaluation criteria and scoring, including the separate evaluation track for applicants proposing research and demonstration projects.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.9: Can non-permanent equipment like HVAC air filters or portable air cleaners be purchased for schools under this grant? Would this type of project on its own make for a competitive application?

Answer: Non-permanent equipment like HVAC air filters and portable air cleaners can be purchased under this grant. Be sure to also review the evaluation criteria in Section V. of the NOFO for information on application scoring.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.10: How important are GHG reduction and energy efficiency activities vs. indoor air pollution reduction activities? Should applicants seeking to submit a competitive application focus on both?

Answer: GHG reduction (e.g., via energy efficiency) and indoor air pollution reduction are equally important

under this funding opportunity and both are called for under all four project areas outlined in Section I.B. of the NOFO.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.11: Is asbestos an eligible form of air pollution to address in projects under this grant?

Answer: Yes.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.12: All else being equal, would an application that benefits a greater number of schools over a broad geographic area be more competitive than an application serving fewer schools in a single state?

Answer: Yes. Please review the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO for more information on scoring.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.13: Can projects support schools that already have IAQ management plans in place?

Answer: Yes. While assisting schools that lack IAQ management plans to develop and implement them is a priority under this NOFO, EPA recognizes that grantees can also assist schools with inadequate or outdated IAQ management plans in place by helping them to update and implement those plans.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.14: Are ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) technologies that produce ozone in a sealed chamber, but do not release that ozone into occupied spaces, considered ineligible for funding per Section III.D of the NOFO that restricts ozone generators? The technology in question is CARB certified as "Zero Ozone."

Answer: No. Based on this description, the technology in question would not be considered an ozone generator if the ozone generated is entirely contained and not released into occupied spaces.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.15: What technologies are eligible for research and demonstration under Project Area 4?

Answer: EPA does not specify eligible technologies for research and demonstration under this NOFO, but does specify the following ineligible technologies: bipolar ionization, ozone generators, ionizing air cleaners, and oxidizing air cleaners.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

4.16: Can a grantee award subgrants for pilot projects at schools? Is there a limit to the funding limit for subgrants?

Answer: A grantee can award subgrants. There is no specific funding limit for subgrants, but the funding limits outlined in Q&A 2.1 apply. Be sure to also review Q&A 7.4 above regarding naming "partners" in an application.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

4.17: Can grantees use funding for software/services for tasks like managing sensor data or editing training videos?

Answer: Yes.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

4.18: Do measurements of health/educational outcomes of students or staff count as human subject studies that are not permitted under the NOFO per Section I.F.?

Answer: On February 21, EPA published an [amended version of the NOFO](#) to correct an error in Section I.F. that misidentified human subject studies as being ineligible for funding. Measurements of health/educational outcomes of students and/or school employees is an allowable activity in this NOFO. Please review the revised language in Section I.F. for more information.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

4.19: Does anonymized data collection on school student/staff sickness need approval from EPA Human Subjects Research Review Official (HSRRO) before the research activities commence?

Answer: Yes. Anonymized data collection may still constitute human subject studies and would need approval from an HSRRO before the activities commence per Section I.F. of the revised NOFO. Submission of human subject study paperwork will occur after grant selection and before funds are provided and work commences. Human subject research activities must align with [EPA human subjects requirements](#). That webpage provides an example of anonymous data collection.

Date Posted: 3/6/2024

4.20: Can funds be used to support school districts outside the United States?

Answer: No. Applicants will be evaluated based on their impact on K-12 schools in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities across the United States per Section I.C. of the NOFO. This is inclusive of states, Tribal land, US territories, and the District of Columbia.

Date Posted: 3/6/2024

5. Allowable Costs

5.1: Are administrative costs allowable?

Answer: Yes. Applicants should review Section I.B. of the NOFO to identify eligible projects. As noted in [RAIN-2019-G02, "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance,"](#) any costs that are necessary and reasonable to carry out an eligible project are eligible expenses, including administrative costs.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

5.2: As part of a research and development project, are engineering services to evaluate existing school facility equipment an eligible cost?

Answer: Yes.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

6. Applicant Eligibility

6.1: Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

Answer: Consistent with Assistance Listing No.66.034 and [EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements \(EPA Order § 5700.5A1\)](#), Tribes, states, territories, local governments/educational agencies, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply.

Tip: Entities with experience conducting **national, regional, or multi-state** IAQ management capacity building programs, providing IAQ training, executing IAQ research in school settings, or disseminating IAQ standards/policies that have achieved positive outcomes (especially with schools and Tribal entities) are encouraged to apply.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

6.2: Are Tribal schools that are not funded by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) eligible to apply?

Answer: Tribal schools that are not federally operated are eligible to apply for and receive funding through this NOFO.

Tip: Federally operated Tribal schools, like those managed by the Bureau of Indian Education, are not eligible to apply for and receive funding through this NOFO, but they can benefit from the activities of grantees of this NOFO.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

6.3: Are public school districts eligible to apply?

Answer: Local education agencies, including public school districts, are eligible to apply. However, school districts should closely review the NOFO and this Q&A document, including Q&A 4.1 above, to ensure the projects they are proposing are eligible. School districts proposing projects that will only benefit their own schools are unlikely to meet the program goals and objective detailed in Section I.B of the NOFO.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

6.4: If a school was identified as being in a low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal community in CEJST/EJScreen within the past 2 years, but is no longer, will it be considered disadvantaged under this NOFO?

Answer: Yes. As noted in the Council of Environmental Quality’s [CEJST Instructions](#), communities will be considered as a disadvantaged community for up to two years after losing its status as disadvantaged in CEJST. These communities are labeled as such in the current version of CEJST. Applicants relying on the EJScreen options identified in Section I.C. of the NOFO should use the current version of EJScreen.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

6.5: Are for-profit organizations eligible to apply?

Answer: No.

Date Posted: 1/23/2024

6.6: We see that “Applicants can submit no more than one application per organization.” However, can an organization submit an application and also be listed as a partner receiving a subaward on another application submitted by a different organization?

Answer: Yes.

Date Posted: 1/29/2024

6.7: Does EPA have a list of specific organizations that are eligible entities for this funding opportunity?

Answer: No. Please review Section III.A. of the NOFO for guidance on eligible entities.

Date Posted: 1/29/2024

6.8: Would an application from a large urban school district for a project that will only benefit that school district be a competitive application or are you looking for a wider geographic reach than one large school district?

Answer: An application that will only serve one school district – regardless of the size of that school district – is unlikely to meet the grant program goal of supporting state, multi-state, regional, or national scale projects.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

6.9: Are joint proposals between organizations allowed?

Answer: Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this NOFO; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. See section IV.D. Coalition Coverage Clause for more info.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

6.10: Can a university apply for these grants?

Answer: Institutions of higher education are eligible to apply for this competition to benefit K-12 schools in low-income, disadvantaged, or Tribal communities. For profit entities are not eligible under this competition.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

6.11: Can an organization submit more than one application?

Answer: No. An eligible organization can only submit one application on Grants.gov for this funding opportunity. If an organization submits more than one application, EPA will contact the applicant to determine which application(s) to withdraw. If the applicant does not respond to EPA within two business days of being contacted, EPA will review the last application(s) submitted and will disregard all others.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

6.12: Are federally funded R&D centers (FFRDCs) like Department of Energy national laboratories eligible to apply? Are they allowed to be a sub-recipient on another organization’s application?

Answer: Federally funded R&D centers are not eligible for funding under this competition if their sponsoring agreement contains a provision that prohibits the contractor from responding to requests for proposals from Federal agencies that involve direct comparative competition such as this one. As a general matter, a FFRDC is a contractor, not an arm or organ of a funding agency, so aside from this provision barring competition they would be eligible to apply if they are a nonprofit organization.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

6.13: Can an organization be listed as a partner or subaward recipient on multiple applications for which they are not the primary applicant?

Answer: Yes.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

6.14: Can individual staff members appear on multiple grant applications?

Answer: Yes, but organizations cannot submit multiple applications.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

6.15: Can an individual that recently worked for a government agency and is no longer affiliated with that agency be part of a team submitting an application from an eligible entity?

Answer: Yes.

Date Posted: 3/6/2024

7. Other

7.1: Who should applicants contact with questions or for assistance?

Answer: Contact IAQSchools@epa.gov if you have questions after reviewing this Q&A document and NOFO posted [here](#).

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

7.2: How are applicants selected for funding?

Answer: Each application will be rated using a point system. Track A applications, which address combinations of project areas 1-3 will be evaluated based on a total of 105 points possible. Track B applications, which include project area 4 in their proposal, will be evaluated based on a total of 115 points possible. Track A and B applications will be ranked separately.

Full details on how applications will be reviewed can be found in Section V of the NOFO.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

7.3: When will applicants be notified if they were selected for funding?

Answer: EPA anticipates notifying applicants of their selection status in May 2024.

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

7.4: Should I name contractors, consultants, or subrecipients in my application?

Answer: Prior to naming a contractor (including consultants) or subrecipient in your application as a “partner,” please carefully review Section IV.d. of [EPA’s Solicitation Clauses](#) that are incorporated by reference in this announcement and discussed in relevant part here. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 2 CFR Part 200. Applicants are not required to identify subrecipients and/or contractors (including consultants) in their grant application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subrecipient, contractor, or consultant in the application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward

and/or competitive procurement requirements as described in Section IV.d. of EPA's Solicitation Clauses. **Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering, or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the firm's role in preparing the application or based on an assertion that the individual or firm has "unique qualifications."**

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subrecipients and/or named contractor(s) during the application evaluation process unless the applicant provides documentation that it has complied with these requirements.

For additional guidance, applicants should review [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#), [EPA's Subaward Policy](#), and [EPA's Subaward Policy Frequent Questions](#). EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500 as well as EPA's rule on Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in EPA Programs in 40 CFR Part 33. **The Agency does not accept justifications for sole source contracts for services or products available in the commercial marketplace such as consulting, data analysis, or project management.**

Date Posted: 1/11/2024

7.5: If a private company partners with a K-12 school district that is the primary applicant to conduct a research and development project based on the private company's technology, would that be a competitive application?

Answer: Applications must address at least two of the four project areas outlined in the NOFO (one of which being R&D). Please review the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the NOFO to determine if your application may be competitive. EPA will not consider proposals that fund the research or demonstration of bipolar ionization, ozone generators, ionizing air cleaners, and oxidizing air cleaners. Lastly, be sure to review Q&A 7.4 above regarding naming "partners" in an application.

Date Posted: 2/12/2024

7.6: What are the reporting responsibilities for grantees and subrecipients?

Answer: Grantees are required to submit quarterly reports and a final report per section VI.B. of the NOFO. The primary grantee is responsible for all reporting requirements, per 2 CFR 200.332 subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for all terms and conditions of the award including progress reports.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

7.7: Can grantees partner with international companies outside the US? Are there restrictions on non-US technologies?

Answer: Grantees can partner with international companies, but should review the NOFO and Q&A 7.4 regarding naming "partners" in an application. In terms of technology restrictions, please review Q&A 4.4 on ineligible activities and also Section VI.C. of the NOFO detailing Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

7.8: Will this funding opportunity be offered again next year?

Answer: At this time, EPA does not anticipate offering additional grants under this program. Future funding opportunities would require appropriations from Congress.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

7.9: How many applicants will EPA select for funding from the Track A and Track B applicants detailed in Section V.A. of the NOFO?

Answer: EPA anticipates awarding at least one application from both tracks. The number of awards in each

track will depend on the number and quality of applications we receive.

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

7.10: Can schools integrate indoor air quality and GHG reduction research and demonstration knowledge from the work of grantees into their curriculums?

Answer: Yes

Date Posted: 2/21/2024

7.11: Is this grant covered under Executive Order 12372? If so, does it require entities within the District of Columbia seeking funding to go through the intergovernmental review process? Is there specific documentation or acknowledgement required in the proposal submission by applicants to document approval under E.O. 12372?

Answer: Possibly, EO 12372 will apply to grants when proposed Federal financial assistance involves land use planning or construction associated with demonstration projects. See additional details [here](#).

Date Posted: 3/6/2024

7.12: Can a grantee use another organization to perform the project management and/or the financial reporting functions? If so, can these functions be paid as subaward partners if they follow the guidelines for subawards or contracts?

Answer: The primary grantee is ultimately responsible for completing the project and the grant reporting requirements. But, grantees can partner with other organizations to assist in project management and reporting. Be sure to review Q&A 7.4 regarding naming "partners" in an application. For additional guidance, applicants should review [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements, EPA's Subaward Policy, and EPA's Subaward Policy Frequent Questions](#).

NEW *Date Posted: 3/12/2024*

7.13: In the event that grant funds are awarded to this project and a partner district is no longer able to continue, is there flexibility to engage new/additional partners?

Answer: Yes, it is possible the grantee can include new partners. However, depending on the extent of the change and how integral a partner may be in a project, a departing partner could jeopardize the EPA's ability to award the grant. Any change to a grant awarded under a competition must be within scope of the original application and not negatively impact the performance of the award as compared against the NOFO's evaluation criteria. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award can lead to additional terms and conditions as described in [2 CFR 200.208](#) or possible remedies for noncompliance under [2 CFR 200.339 through 343](#).

NEW *Date Posted: 3/12/2024*

7.14: Is there a budgetary threshold under which consultant competition is not required?

Answer: The micro-purchase threshold is currently \$10,000. Sole-source contracts in excess of the micro-purchase threshold should be rare. Applicants are encouraged to review [EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#).

NEW *Date Posted: 3/12/2024*