

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

TITLE: 2016 SOUTH FL INITIATIVE

ACTION: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER (FON): EPA-R4-16-SFL-01

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.436

DATES: The closing date and time for submission of proposals through www.grants.gov is June 28, 2016, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET). **No hard copies will be accepted for this RFP.** Proposals received after June 28, 2016, 11:59 p.m. ET will not be considered for funding.

SUMMARY: This request for proposal announces the availability of funds and solicits proposals under a competitive announcement to fund projects for the South FL Water Geographic Initiative, Water Quality Protection Program for the FL Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Southeast FL Coral Reef Initiative/Land Based Sources of Pollution. This announcement is an open competition for applicants to apply for funding on projects meeting the goals and objectives under these programs.

FUNDING/AWARDS: EPA Region 4 anticipates receiving approximately \$250,000 in FY16 to fund three to five proposals with funding ranging from \$25,000 - \$200,000 each to address the six R4 Priority Areas, Special Studies/Research, and Public Education/Outreach activities described in Section I of this announcement. The total amount of funding and awards that will be made under this announcement depends on funding availability, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. Unless pre-award costs are specifically approved by EPA, recipients should not incur project costs, including nonfederal match, until they receive an award offer from EPA.

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Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) was created with the signing of Public Law 101-605, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and Protection Act of 1990. Included in the Sanctuary are 2,900 square nautical miles of nearshore waters extending from Biscayne Bay to the Dry Tortugas. Recognizing the critical role of water quality in maintaining Sanctuary resources, Congress directed the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Florida, in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to develop a Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP) for the Sanctuary – the first of its kind in the nation. The Act directs the WQPP to develop corrective actions and compliance schedules to address point and nonpoint sources of pollution to maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Sanctuary. This includes restoration and maintenance of a balance, indigenous population of corals, shellfish, fish and wildlife, and recreational activities in and on the water. In addition to corrective actions, the 1990 Act requires public participation developing and implementing the program.

In 1998, The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) was established by Executive Order #13089 to lead U.S. efforts to restore and protect coral reef ecosystems. In October 2002, the USCRTF implemented a National Action Plan to conserve coral reefs. The Local Action Strategy for coral reef conservation and management in southeast Florida was finalized in 2004 and includes the following focus areas: land-based sources of pollution; fishing, diving and other uses; maritime industry and coastal construction impacts; and awareness and appreciation.

This funding opportunity is for Special Studies/Research and Public Education/Outreach for the South Florida Geographic Initiative including the Water Quality Protection Program for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative. Examples of eligible Special Studies/Research program activities include: identifying and understanding cause/effect relationships of pollutants, transport pathways and biological communities of the Sanctuary; developing effective remediation techniques for aquatic resources; addressing specific management questions and concerns; development of predictive models and monitoring tools; and overall improvement of our understanding of South Florida ecosystems. Examples of eligible Public Education and Outreach projects include: increasing public awareness regarding residential canal remediation; impacts of non-point source pollution; increasing awareness of South Florida aquatic resources; distribution of Best Management Practices literature; and solicitation of public participation to assist with implementation of FKNMS Water Quality and Protection Program corrective actions.

B. Scope of Work

There are **six** Region 4 Priority Areas – Proposals must address one or more of the following priority areas:

Priority Action Items identified in Appendix 1: of *The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program Report to Congress, September 2013*

http://ocean.floridamarine.org/fknms_wqpp/products/wqpp/FKNMS%20Biennial%20Report%20201309.pdf

Improve Water Quality in Residential Canals – Activity W. 10

The Monroe County Canal Master Plan (CCMP) identified those canals impaired due to low oxygen, high organic matter and poor water clarity. Activities to improve canal water quality include identify and implementing pilot projects that demonstrate innovative technologies to restoring water quality in the canal systems of the Florida Keys; updating the CCMP; and effective monitoring to evaluate performance of canal restoration techniques. Any innovative technologies or management practices identified in this study must, at a minimum, comply with all applicable regulations and water quality standards in effect in the Florida Keys.

Special Study: Endocrine Disruptors Impacts on Aquatic Ecosystems in the Florida Keys – Activity W.23

Prepare a scientific report that reviews and evaluates the scientific literature identifying endocrine disruptors, that can adversely affect corals, fish, sponges, urchins, mollusks and other aquatic organisms within the Florida Keys; identifies both local and far-field sources of endocrine disruptors and reviews all available scientific data showing the presence and concentration of endocrine disruptors in surface waters and in land-based discharges within the Florida Keys, including treated wastewater effluent, stormwater runoff, mosquito control and far-field sources; provides information on the existing legal authorities and regulations that can be used to address the identified endocrine disruptor concerns; provides potential management strategies and techniques appropriate for the Florida Keys to minimize negative impacts to the environment associated with use of endocrine disruptors, including measures to discourage the disposal of endocrine disruptors, such as pharmaceuticals, personal care products, or household hazardous wastes into wastewater disposal systems or stormwater drainage systems; and identifies areas of future research.

Develop a special study that identifies the type, concentrations, source(s), distribution and transport of endocrine disruptors in the canals and nearshore waters of the Florida Keys.

Public Education and Outreach – Activity W.14

Increase awareness and involvement of the general public and government officials to implement Water Quality Protection Program corrective actions, restoration activities, education, program activities and projects designed to protect, maintain and restore the water quality and natural resources of the Florida Keys Ecosystem.

Special Study: Stormwater Pollutants – Activity W-22

Investigate stormwater impacts from roads and paved surfaces to near-shore waters and/or residential canal systems that contribute to impaired water quality and ecological impacts. Identify best management practices and cost-effective technologies available to improve stormwater management and treatment in the unique environment of the Florida Keys. The study shall include cost estimates for the construction and operation of the recommended best management practices and technologies. In addition, all the recommended best management practices and technologies must comply, at a minimum, with all applicable regulations and water quality standards in effect in the Florida Keys. Develop stormwater ordinances to control fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide application on landscapes.

Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI)

The key goals and objectives are to characterize the existing condition of the coral reef ecosystem; quantify and characterize the land-based sources of pollution, identify how these sources of pollution impact the coral reef; develop strategies to reduce the impact of land-based sources of pollution; and increase public awareness and understanding of the effects of land-based sources of pollution on water quality and coral reefs.

<http://dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/coral/land-based.htm>

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage & Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs & Performance Measures

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements”, EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency’s Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements).

1. **Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan:** All proposals must support EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 “Protecting America’s Waters, Objective 2.2 “*Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems*”.

The special studies included in this announcement of the federal funding opportunity support EPA’s 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, Goal: “*Protecting America’s Waters*” and **the FY16 National Water Program Guidance Strategies to Protect and Restore the Health of Communities and Large Aquatic - South Florida Ecosystem found**

at https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/fy_2016_nwpg_measure_definitions_south_florida.pdf

2. **Outputs:** The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced over a period of time or by a specific date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of outputs for projects include:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of efforts to reduce or eliminate sources of pollution and to evaluate progress toward achieving and maintaining water quality and protecting and restoring coral reef habitat and other living resources.
- Characterization of sources and causes of water quality impairment within a watershed that will allow the development of management/action/restoration plan(s).
- Preparation and timely delivery of quarterly and draft/final project reports that document results of the special study project.

Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI(C) of this announcement, “Reporting Requirement”.

3. **Outcomes:** The term “outcome” means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but may be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Projects to be funded with this announcement are expected to produce outcomes related to the outputs identified in the proposal.

Examples of expected outcomes that may occur because of the technical/scientific information generated by the special studies projects associated with this announcement include:

- Increase knowledge of managers and elected officials concerning negative impacts of pollutants on water quality and living biological resources, which should lead to the development and implementation of action plans that will reduce pollutant loading and result in the conservation of natural resources.

- Maintenance and/or improvement of water quality.
 - Maintenance of health of seagrass beds.
 - Restoration and/or maintenance of coral reef habitat.
 - Reduce pollutant loading to inland, nearshore and coastal waters.
4. **Performance Measures:** The applicant should also develop performance measures expected to be achieved through the proposed activities and they should be described in the proposal. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful process and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients.

D. Supplementary Information

The statutory authority for this action is the Clean Water Act (Section 104(b)(3), which authorizes the award of assistance agreements for Water Quality and Watershed Management: Studies, Surveys, and Investigations; Grants and Cooperative Agreements. This announcement supports the Water Quality Protection Program for the Florida National Marine Sanctuary and the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative.

- Examples of eligible Studies/Research include: identifying and understanding the cause and effects relationships of pollutants, transport pathways, and biological communities of the Sanctuary; developing effective remediation techniques for aquatic resources; addressing specific management questions and concerns; development of predictive models and monitoring tools; and overall improvement of our understanding of South FL ecosystems.
- Examples of eligible Public Education and Outreach include: increases public awareness regarding residential canal remediation; impacts of non-point source pollution; increasing awareness of South FL aquatic resources; citizen monitoring; distribution of Best Management Practices literature; solicitation of public participation to assist with implementation of FKNMS Water Quality and Protection Program corrective actions.

Section II. Award Information

- A. **Funding Amount:** The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive announcement is approximately \$250,000. The total maximum grant funding is \$200,000 per award.

- B. **Reject of Proposals:** EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement or make fewer than expected.
- C. **Partial Funding:** In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phase of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, 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 therefore, maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

The Project Officer and Technical Officer will contact the effected recipients to discuss the partial funding and whether the partial award is acceptable. If the recipient agrees to the partial funding, then the recipient will be requested to submit a revised scope of work and revised budget sheets.

- D. **Number of Awards:** EPA anticipates awarding three - five assistance agreements under this announcement ranging in value from approximately \$25,000 to \$200,000, subject to the availability of funds, quality of evaluated proposals, and other applicable considerations. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of the original selections.
- E. **Project Period:** The estimated project period for awards resulting from this selection may begin in August 2016. Proposed project/budget periods can range from one to three years for this funding announcement.
- F. **Funding Type:** The funding for selected projects will be in the form of grants or cooperative agreements. The appropriate funding type and programmatic grant terms and conditions will be added to the grant award document. For most projects associated with the WQPP for the FKNMS, a cooperative agreement is the preferred funding mechanism. The principal purpose of the federal and non-federal relationship established by a cooperative agreement is the transfer of money to the recipient to accomplish a “public purpose” of support or stimulation; in addition, there will be substantial involvement between EPA R4, the FKNMS Water “Quality Protection Program and the recipient during performance of the activity with coordination and collaboration to achieve the goals under this program. The successful applicant will be expected to participate and present project updates at the FKNMS Water Quality Protection Program meetings annually. If necessary, include and identify travel funds in the budget to attend these meetings.

Section III. Eligibility Information

- A. **Eligibility Entities:** In accordance with CFDA 66.436, proposals will be accepted from States, local governments, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia); public and private universities and colleges; hospitals; laboratories; public or private nonprofit institutions; intertribal consortia; and individuals.

Non-profit organization, as defined by 2 CFR 200, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve and/or expand its operations. Note that 2 CFR 200 specifically excludes the following types of organizations from the definition of “non-profit organization” because they are separately defined in the Circular: (i) colleges and universities; (ii) hospitals; (iii) state, local and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; and (iv) those non-profit organization that are excluded from coverage of this Circular in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Circular. While not considered to be a “non-profit organization(s)” as defined by 2 CFR Part 200, colleges and universities, hospitals, state, local and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments are, nevertheless, eligible to submit proposals under 2 CFR Part 200 and this RFP.

For-profit organizations are not an eligible entity for this funding opportunity. Additionally, non-profit organizations described in Section 501(s)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

- B. **Cost Sharing or Matching:** No matching funds are required under this competition. Although cost sharing/matching is not required as a condition of eligibility under this competition, under Section V of this announcement EPA will evaluate proposals based on a leveraging criterion.
1. **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 grant funds awarded. Any leveraged funds/resources, and their source, must be identified in the proposal (See Section IV of the announcement). Leveraged funds and resources may take various forms as noted below.
 2. **Voluntary cost share is a form of leveraging.** Voluntary cost sharing is when an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project when a cost share is not required. Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share must include the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost

share in the project budget on the SF-424. If an applicant proposes a voluntary cost share, the following apply:

- A voluntary cost share is subject to the match provisions in the grant regulations 2 CFR Part 200 as applicable.
 - A voluntary cost share may only be met with eligible and allowable costs.
 - The recipient may not use other sources of federal funds to meet a voluntary cost share unless the statute authorizing the other federal funding provides that the federal funds may be used to meet a cost share requirement on a federal grant.
 - The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget. If the proposed voluntary cost share does not materialize during grant performance, the EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 CFR Part 200 as applicable.
3. **Other leveraged funding/resources** that are not identified as a voluntary cost share. This form of leveraging may be met by funding from another federal grant, from an applicant's own resources, or resources from other third party sources. This form of leveraging should not be included in the budget and the costs need not be eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement. While this form of leveraging should not be included in the budget, the grant workplan should include a statement indicating that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's proposal. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their proposals. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 CFR 200.

C. Threshold Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals from eligible entities (see above) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement. 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. Proposals must address one or more of the Priority Areas listed in Section I.
2. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal/applicant and submission information instructions and requirements set forth in Sections IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed

in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

3. Proposals must be submitted through www.grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal is timely submitted.
4. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal 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 late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Ms. Jennifer Shadle as soon as possible after the submission deadline – failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
5. Applicants may submit multiple proposals under this announcement but each one must be for a different project. If an applicant submits more than one proposal for the same project EPA will review the first one received and any additional proposals for the same project will be deemed ineligible.

Section IV. Proposal Submission Information

Proposal Information

A. Proposal

In order to simplify the review process, obtain the maximum degree of comparison, and provide a fair and equitable evaluation of proposals, reviewers will rely on the content of the full proposal for evaluation purposes. Therefore, it is important that all full proposals are complete and adhere to the standard format as described in detail in this Section. For completeness of your grant proposal, please refer to the Proposal Submission Checklist (Appendix A). The proposal must be submitted through Grants.gov. Each proposal must consist of the following components:

1. Proposal Cover Page (see Appendix B for a sample)
2. A one page project proposal summary.
3. Application for Federal Assistance – Standard Form 424 (SF-424)

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF-424. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

4. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs – Standard Form 424A (SF424A)

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. 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, and column (5) should be filled out for total project cost (combined federal funds and non-federal cost share/match).

B. Proposal Workplan (16 page maximum double spaced)

The workplan should be readable in PDF or MS Word and consolidated into a single file. Please remember that there is a page limit for the workplan. All required documents, including the budget sheet should be attached at the beginning of the proposal.

The proposal workplan, must be no more than sixteen (16) double-spaced 8.5 x 11 inch pages (a page is one side of paper) (except for documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins and that applicants format their workplan as described below for ease of reading. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal workplan. Additional pages beyond the 16 page limit will not be reviewed. If a single-spaced proposal workplan is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 16 page double-spaced page limit for proposal workplans [**eight (8) single-spaced pages is the equivalent of the 16-page double-spaced proposal workplan page limit; any single-spaced pages in excess of 8 will not be reviewed**]. The budget information, as described below, must be included within the 16-page limit not in the supporting materials or appendix. Any supporting materials (such as support letters from partners and annotated resumes) that the applicant chooses to provide are not included in the 16-page limit for the proposal workplan and should be submitted as attachments.

Full proposals that do not substantially comply with the criteria above may be returned unreviewed.

The Workplan must include the information below in paragraphs 1-13.

1. Introduction

- a. Situation, Need, and Previous Efforts - Discuss notable gaps in knowledge or capabilities, why the proposed project should be performed, review significant work by yourself or by others in the proposed area of interest (include reference citations).
- b. Objective(s) - State what is to be studied, measured, observed, or developed, and the anticipated results. State hypotheses that the proposed special study is designed to test.
- c. Applications, Benefits, and Importance - Describe how the anticipated results relate to the goals/objectives of the FKNMS Water Quality Protection Program or the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative, the expected benefits, and their utility.

2. Methods and Approach

- d. Description of Major Tasks - Divide the proposed effort into a meaningful set of tasks that must be performed to accomplish the objective(s) and describe each task. State the tasks in the same order as the hypotheses they are designed to test. Experimental design must be described with statistical tests, if applicable, for hypotheses proposed.
- e. Environmental Impact - State and explain any possible impact that your project will have on the environment, including the type and duration of such changes. List in as much detail as possible the number of samples and species needed for your study. Document the need for sampling and objectively discuss potential impacts.
- f. Future Efforts - If there are future efforts that should be performed in order for your project to be meaningful, or of major significance, please describe briefly the type, extent, and timing of those efforts. Is this a multi-year project? If possible, the individual parts (i.e., each year's effort) should stand alone.

3. Project Management

- g. Administration - Describe the administrative responsibilities and authority of the Principal Investigator.
- h. Roles/Assignments and Participation Time - Describe the team composition (including names and affiliations of key individuals) and the

assignments of team members to major tasks. Provide specific estimates of the time (in hours, days, etc., not percent) that each member will work on the project.

4. Support Requirements and Conditions

i. Cooperation From Other Organizations - If a clearance or permit(s) from any government agency is required for execution of the project please provide the name of the agency, the method of obtaining the clearance or permit, and the time required or state "none".

j. Date or Facility Access - If access is required to data or facilities held by another organization, please identify the data or facility, the nature and type of access required, the methods of obtaining such access, and the effect of being denied access or state "none".

5. Results/Outputs and Deliverables

Two types of reports are required from principal investigators.

k. Bi-Annual Reports - The principal investigator shall provide bi-annual progress reports to the Project Officer on March 30th and November 30th of each year. These reports will consist of updates on progress toward work objectives, justification, approach, results to date, any problems encountered, actions taken to resolve problems, discussion of remaining tasks, and expenditures to date.

l. Final Report - Principal investigators shall prepare a draft final report summarizing the objectives, methods, approach, results, and significance of the study. The draft final report will be reviewed by the Project Officer and returned with comments. The principal investigator will address the comments and submit the final report with revisions. The final report will be due within six months of the completion of the project.

m. Deliverable Items and Schedule - Describe what items of data are to be delivered. State the format in which data will be presented. Provide a schedule for all deliverables.

Under a cooperative agreement with EPA and the FKNMS, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) have developed a data management plan and data management system for the monitoring and research programs in the FKNMS. Each grant recipient for special studies will work with FWRI to define data entry formats and data QA/QC protocols, and resolve data management conventions and issues. All original and ancillary data produced under the Special Studies Program will be generated, processed, stored, and archived in a manner that provides detailed documentation of the

procedures used at all stages of data collection, reduction, processing, analysis, and storage.

6. Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes, and Results

n. Outputs (project products) - List the outputs expected to be produced through the completion of the proposed project; Outcomes (project objectives) - List the outcomes of the project to be accomplished as a result of the project outputs; [Link to EPA Strategic Plan](#) - Describe how project products (outputs) and objectives (outcomes) support EPA's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, Goal: "*Protecting America's Waters*" and **National Water Program Guidance Strategies to Protect and Restore the Health of Communities and Large Aquatic - South Florida Ecosystem found at https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/fy_2016_nwpg_measure_definitions_south_florida.pdf**

o. Tracking Outputs and Outcomes - Describe your approach for measuring and tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) and project outcome(s). Environmental Results-Applicants will be evaluated based on their plan and approach for measuring their progress towards achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs including those identified in Section I. B. 2. within this announcement.

7. Literature Cited

References used in the proposal narrative.

8. Budget Summary

This section of the workplan is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A, and must include a detailed discussion of how EPA funds will be used. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

Appendix C provides information on the individual cost categories. Provide a detailed budget narrative describing funding for personnel, fringe benefits, travel expenses, equipment, supplies, contractual if applicable and other expenses.

General Information – Region 4 anticipates funding three - five Special Studies proposals in the \$25,000 - \$200,000 range until the \$250,000 in anticipated funding is awarded for FY 2016. Region Special Studies Program is viewed as long-term and additional dollars may be available to support additional special projects in future fiscal years. Applicants with accepted proposals will be eligible to receive funds from EPA via federal assistance agreements.

Specific budget information must be submitted in tabular form and summarized on Standard Form 424A. Applicants can download individual grant application forms, including Standard Forms (SF) 424 and SF 424A, from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>. If you cannot access the electronic forms, contact the person listed in Section VII of this announcement and a paper application kit will be mailed upon request.

9. Biographies and Qualifications

Provide a brief biography for each team member that highlights education, experience, and publications related to the proposed project. Curriculum vitae must not exceed three pages each.

10. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last five years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/prior 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 or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

11. Voluntary cost share/match and other leveraged funds (See Section III.B also)

Demonstrate how you will leverage additional funds/resources beyond the grant funds awarded to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor

organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Describe the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how you will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged resources will play to support the proposed project activities. Selected applicants are expected to abide by their proposed leveraging commitments during grant performance and the failure to do so may affect the legitimacy of the award.

12. Appendices (3 pages maximum not included on the workplan 16 page limit) are recommended

Short appendices, not to exceed three total pages, may be used to provide technical backup material to the text, details of computation, and other pertinent information. Techniques or methodologies, if critical to the successful completion of the research, should be discussed in detail within the proposal text (twelve-page limit). Do not attach copies of any journal articles or other proposals to your submittal.

NOTE: Proposals that do not follow the required format may be returned not reviewed

13. Additional Provisions Incorporated Into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

C. Requirements to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement and Appendix A. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required proposal materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g. by hard copy, email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their proposal materials through an alternate method.

Mailing Address: OGD
Waivers
c/o Barbara Perkins
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, D.C. 20460

Courier Address: OGD
Waivers
c/o Barbara Perkins Ronald
Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Room #51267
Washington, D.C. 20460

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Organization Name and DUNS
- Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
- Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through www.Grants.gov.

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request – all other requests will be denied. If an alternative submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding proposal contact and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternative submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for proposal submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g. if the exception was approved on March 1, 2016, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive proposal submission to EPA through December 31, 2016). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that

calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov from submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity listed on December 1, 2016, with a submission deadline of January 15, 2017, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2017.

Please note that the process described in this section is only for requesting alternative submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of this announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternative submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

D. Submission Instructions

Appendix D provides additional detailed information on Grants.gov Submission Instructions – please review it before submitting your proposal.

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose DUNS number is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS number listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization’s SAM account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-readercompatibility.html>

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R4-16-SFL-01, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.436), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click “Browse Agencies” in the middle of the page and then go to “Environmental Protection Agency” to find the EPA funding opportunities.

E. Mandatory Documents:

Please include the following as part of your proposal/application when submitting through Grants.gov

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Key Contacts
4. Proposal Cover Page (Sample in Appendix B)
5. One page project proposal summary
6. Narrative Proposal as described in Section IV B. 1-12 of the announcement

Optional Documents:

1. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL), if applicable
2. Other Attachments, if applicable

F. Proposal Submission Deadline:

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than 11:59pm ES on June 28, 2015. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit. Please submit *all* of the application materials described below using the www.grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the “Show Instructions” tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Section V. Proposal Evaluation and Review Information

A. Merit Evaluation

Only eligible entities whose proposals meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.B. below. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal package submittal. All eligible proposals will be evaluated by reviewers using the following criteria to receive a score up to a total of 115 points:

B. Proposals will be evaluated by reviewers using the following criteria:

1. Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds - Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds - Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. **(5 points)**
2. Rationale - how well the proposed project addresses one or more of the Priority Areas listed in Section I **(20 points)**.
3. Scientific Merit - How well the project advances the state of science and knowledge within the South Florida marine ecosystems to assist the management decision making process. Components of the scientific merit review includes: background of the project, statement of the purpose, significance of the study, research question and design, methodology, project assumptions/limitations and anticipated findings **(20 points)**.
4. Feasibility - ability of the project to be successfully completed within the time frames discussed in this announcement and other relevant constraints **(15 points)**.
5. Environmental Results: **Outputs, Outcomes and Tracking** – proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposal demonstrates the following: **(5 points each, total of 15 points)**.
 - a. Outputs (products) expected to be achieved by this project.
 - b. Outcomes (objectives) expected to be achieved by this project.
 - c. That their proposed project's objectives/outcomes are related to both the EPA's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, Goal: "*Protecting America's Waters*" and the FY16 National Water Program Guidance Strategies to "*Protect and Restore the Health of Communities and Large Aquatic - South Florida Ecosystem*".
6. Relevance to Resource Management - degree to which the proposals' approach to addressing one of the Priority Areas produces results/outputs that can be applied to identifying and solving problems within the South Florida ecosystem **(10 points)**

7. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance Criteria
(15 Points (3.75 per subcriteria))

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:

- a. past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the narrative proposal as described in Section IV of this announcement,
- b. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV of the announcement including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not,
- c. organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and
- d. staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Note: In evaluating applicants under items a. and b. of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items a and b above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

- 8. Budget - whether the proposed budget is reasonable and adequate to carry out proposed project (5 points).**
- 9. Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds – applications will be evaluated based on approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring the awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner (5 points)**
- 10. Leveraging – Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent you demonstrate that you will leverage additional funds/ resources beyond the grant funds awarded to support proposed project activities and, how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the amount and type of**

leveraged resources to be provided, how you will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds/resources will play to support the proposed project activities. (5 points).

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III by the panel chair. Only those proposals which meet all of the threshold factors will be considered eligible and evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above. The eligible proposals will be given to a panel of EPA staff where each proposal will be reviewed and given a numerical score. The panel will provide a final numerical score based on the cumulative average of all the individual panel members scores per proposal.

Final funding decisions will be made by the Approving Official based on the rankings and recommendations of the EPA evaluation team. In making the final funding decisions, the Approving Official may also consider programmatic priorities. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA Award Official. It is intended that federal assistance agreements will be awarded during the fourth quarter of FY 2016 with project and budget periods to begin on the first day of FY 2017 (October 1, 2016) or as soon as possible thereafter.

Section VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notice

If a proposal is selected for funding, EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic mail or letter no later than July 22, 2016. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal or the project contact listed in the proposal. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by Region 4 Grants Management Office through an official Award Document.

Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award document, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorized document and will be provided through electronic format to the principal contact. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g. workplan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via letter and sent to the original signer of the grant application.

B. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Steve Blackburn at blackburn.steven@epa.gov.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirement

A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm.

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. Applicants selected for funding may be required to provide a copy of their application to their Point of Contact (POC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Application and not all applicants require such a review. A listing of POCs may be viewed at: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html.

D. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions

E. Reporting Requirements

Bi-annual reporting will be required for special studies. The federal assistance agreement recipient shall provide quarterly reports to the EPA project officer. The reports shall consist of updates on progress toward work objectives, justification, approach, results to date, any problems encountered, actions taken to resolve problems, discussion of remaining tasks, and expenditures to date. Bi-annual reports will be due January 30th and June 30th of each year during the project period.

Recipients of federal assistance agreements will be required to submit a draft final report that summarizes the objectives, methods, approach, results, and significance of each project or study. The draft final report will be reviewed by the EPA project officer and returned with comments. The recipient of the federal assistance agreement will address the comments and submit a final report to the EPA project officer with revisions. The final report will be due within 90 days of the project period end date.

F. Quality Assurance/Quality Control

Recipients of federal assistance agreements will be required to develop and submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to the EPA project officer. Approval of the QAPP is required before work can begin or any data can be collected. Through the plan, the recipient explicitly commits to incorporating procedures that will reduce and maintain random and systematic errors within specified tolerable limits. In addition, the recipient of a federal assistance agreement will document quality control procedures and evaluate the quality of the data being produced. Plans should include or refer to a description of safety, training and equipment maintenance. Data quality objectives will be developed to ensure the utility of data for the applications. The QAPP will be prepared according to the format prescribed in "EPA requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans for Environmental Data Operations, EPA OA/R-5". The recipient should develop the QAPP in close coordination with the EPA Region 4 QA/QC Officer and the EPA project officer. If requested, EPA will provide a QAPP on file with Region 4 to assist recipients with preparation of their QAPPs.

G. Data Management

Under cooperative agreements with EPA Region 4 and NOAA/FKNMS, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) manage a data management plan and data management system for the monitoring and special studies programs associated with the FKNMS. Each recipient of a federal assistance agreement for monitoring and special studies projects will work with the designated data management entity to define data entry conventions and issues. All original and ancillary data produced under the monitoring and special studies programs will be generated, processed, stored and archived in a manner that provides detailed documentation of the procedures used during all stages of data collection, reduction, processing, analysis, and storage.

H. Publications

Recipients of federal assistance agreements for special studies are expected to submit manuscripts on the funded projects to appropriate scientific journals within one year of the completion of the final report. Recipients of federal assistance agreements for monitoring projects are expected to submit manuscripts to appropriate scientific journals at an appropriate time during and/or after the completion of the project. The appropriate

time for submission of manuscripts will be negotiated with the EPA project officer. Authors are expected to cite support from the specific sponsor of their project or study in all publications resulting wholly or partially from sponsored activities. For example, an appropriate acknowledgment would be as follows:

“This project/study was funded by a federal assistance agreement from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to assistance Number EPA-R4-16-SFL-01.

Reprints of any abstract, article or other publication that result from this sponsored project/study should be sent to the EPA project officer.

I. Public Relations

Official press releases on the special studies projects may be prepared by EPA Region 4 and/or FKNMS staff to be used by all recipients of federal assistance agreements for distribution to the news media. Principal investigators are not prohibited from discussing their projects with news media; however, principal investigators should notify their EPA project officer of any contacts with the news media regarding special studies projects funded via federal assistance agreements.

Section VII. Agency Contact

If you have any questions concerning this announcement of opportunity for federal funding and proposals, please contact Ms. Jennifer Shadle, email at shadle.jennifer@epa.gov or Mr. Steven Blackburn at (404) 562-9397, email at blackburn.steven@epa.gov.

APPENDIX A
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Respondent: _____

- _____ 1. Proposal Checklist
- _____ 2. Proposal Cover Page along with one page summary
- _____ 3. Application for Federal Assistance – Standard Form 424 (SF-424)
- _____ 4. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs – Standard Form 424A (Sf-424A)
- _____ 5. Proposal Workplan (16 page double spaced maximum)
- _____ 6. Literature Cited
- _____ 7. Budget Summary
- _____ 8. Biographies and Qualifications
- _____ 9. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance
- _____ 10. Leveraging
- _____ 11. Appendices

APPENDIX B
PROPOSAL COVER PAGE SAMPLE

A proposal submitted for projects in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary or Southeast Florida:

Project Title:

Principal Investigator(s):

Date Submitted: _____ Proposed Start Date: _____

We, the undersigned, certify that, in the event this proposal is accepted whole or in part, our signatures on this proposal constitute intended acceptance of and compliance with applicable policy, rules, and regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

ENDORSEMENTS:

Submitted by:
Principal Investigator

Approved by:
Institutional Representative

Signature

Signature

Typed Name

Typed Name

Title

Title

Address

Address

Phone

Fax

Phone

Fax

E-mail

E-mail

For Administrative Detail, Please Contact:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Fax E-mail

APPENDIX C BUDGET DETAIL INFORMATION

Budget Detail

This section of the workplan is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A, and must include a detailed discussion of how EPA funds will be used. Applicants must **itemize** costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

If the project budget includes any cost-share, mandatory or voluntary, the Budget Detail portion of the narrative proposal must include a detailed description of how the applicant will obtain the cost-share and how the cost-share funding will be used. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost-share, applicants must meet their sharing commitment as a legal condition of receiving EPA funding. If the proposed cost-share is to be provided by a third-party, a letter of commitment is required. Any form of cost-share included in the Budget Detail must also be included on the SF424 and SF-424A forms. Please see Section III. B. of this RFP for more detailed information on cost-share.

Applicant should use the following instructions and budget object class descriptions to complete the Budget Detail Section of the workplan.

Personnel – This category includes only direct costs for salaries. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and the total costs for the budget period. This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (generally, paid employees of the applicant organization). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the “Other” category; or (3) effect that is not directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization’s negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for parttime employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.

Fringe Benefits – Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included. Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employees to their employers as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment benefit plans.

Travel – Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-State and out-of-State, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel. Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g. inspections) or related to the proposed project activities (e.g. attendance at meetings). Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the “Contractual” category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the “Other” category.

Equipment – Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year. Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts. These types of proposed costs should be included in the “Other” category. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 CFR 200. The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project.

Supplies – tangible personal property other than “equipment”. The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g. laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the “Other” category.

Contractual – Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated costs. Contractual/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. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the “Other” category. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known.

Other – This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance, rental/lease of equipment or supplies, equipment service or maintenance contracts, printing or photocopying, rebates, and subaward costs. Subawards (e.g. subgrants) are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term “subaward” means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient. This term does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work and a description of the types of activities to be supported.

Indirect Charges – If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base. Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project, and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, the applicant must have a federal or state negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g. fixed, predetermined, final or provisional), or must have submitted a proposal to the cognizant Federal or State agency. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:

- Personnel ($\text{Indirect Rate} \times \text{Personnel} = \text{Indirect Costs}$)
- Personnel and Fringe Benefits ($\text{Indirect Rate} \times \text{Personnel \& Fringe} = \text{Indirect Costs}$)
- Total Direct Costs ($\text{Indirect Rate} \times \text{Total Direct Costs} = \text{Indirect Costs}$)
- Direct Costs minus distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment ($\text{Indirect Rate} \times (\text{total direct} - \text{distorting factors}) = \text{Indirect Costs}$)

Note: When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant’s cognizant Federal audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of this agreement negotiated with EPA. The term “management fees or similar charges” refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges cannot be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost or carrying out the workplan.

APPENDIX D GRANTS.gov SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

Applicants need to ensure that the AOR who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose DUNS number is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the DUNS number listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization’s SAM account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technicalsupport/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R4-15SFL-01, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.436), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click “Browse Agencies” in the middle of the page and then go to “Environmental Protection Agency” to find the EPA funding opportunities.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later

than June 4, 2015, 6pm ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit *all* of the application materials described below using the grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the “Show Instructions” tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Application Materials:

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form
4. Proposal Cover Page (Sample in Appendix B)
5. One page project proposal summary
6. Narrative Proposal as described in Section IV of the announcement

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Ms. Jennifer Shadle, at shadle.jennifer@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

c. Technical Issues with Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the “Submit” button should be enabled. If the “Submit” button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1800-518-4726. 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 606545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced or a revised application needs to be submitted.
2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the “submit” button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear. ***Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date***

identified in Section IV of the solicitation. The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.

A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission. Note: Grants.gov issues a “case number” upon a request for assistance.

3. **Transmission Difficulties.** If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to www.Grants.Gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to Ms. Jennifer Shadle at shadle.jennifer@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Mr. Steve Blackburn at 404-562-9397. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to www.Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.
 - a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call www.Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. 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. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Mr. Steve Blackburn at 404-562-9397.
 - b. **Unsuccessful transfer of the application package:** If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to Ms. Jennifer Shadle prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.
 - c. **Grants.gov rejection of the application package:** If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to Ms. Jennifer Shadle with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.