

**AGENCY:** U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)  
Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)

**TITLE:** Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Program (EJ TCTAC)

**ACTION:** REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

**TYPE:** INITIAL ANNOUCEMENT

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NO:** EPA-I-OP-OEJ-22-02

**ASSISTANCE LISTING NO.** 66.309

**DATES:** ANNOUNCEMENT DATE: August 5, 2022  
CLOSING DATE: October 4, 2022

**DEADLINE:** Application packages must be submitted on or before **October 4, 2022, at 11:59 PM (Eastern Time)** through Grants.gov. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

**Note** - Prior to naming a contractor (including consultants) or subrecipient in your application as a “partner”, please carefully review Section IV.d, “Contracts and Subawards”, of EPA’s Announcement Clauses that are incorporated by reference in this announcement (See Section I.G). EPA expects recipients of funding to comply with competitive procurement contracting requirements 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 based on a contractor’s role in preparing an application.

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## **I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

## A. Executive Orders and Definitions

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as well as other federal government agencies/departments as part of a government-wide effort, are working to address environmental, public health, and energy challenges affecting communities, and specifically those adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental, climate, and human health harms and risks. This includes communities historically underserved and adversely impacted by persistent poverty, inequality, and lack of funding/resources.

In furtherance of this effort, this RFA is being issued to support [Executive Order 13985](#), Advancing Racial Equity And Support For Underserved Communities Through The Federal Government, issued on January 20, 2021, which expressed Administration policy that the federal government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. The Executive Order defines “**underserved communities**” as “populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life...”. As described further in the Executive Order, “underserved communities” include communities such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. For purposes of this RFA, “underserved communities” has the meaning set forth in Executive Order 13985 and includes “environmentally overburdened communities” (that is, communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental, climate and human health harms and risks including remote, rural, and urban communities), and disadvantaged communities.

This RFA also supports [Executive Order 14008](#), Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, issued on January 27, 2021, which deepened the Administration’s commitment to advancing environmental justice by creating the Justice40 Initiative. The Justice40 Initiative establishes a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments—including those in climate change; clean energy and energy efficiency; clean transit; affordable and sustainable housing; training and workforce development; the remediation and reduction of legacy pollution; and the development of critical clean water infrastructure—flow to disadvantaged communities. Increased technical assistance and community engagement of disadvantaged communities was included as a benefit under Justice40 per the Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative ([M-21-28](#)).

“[Environmental justice](#)” as defined by the EPA is the **fair treatment** and **meaningful involvement** of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. **Fair treatment** means that no one group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences

resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal environmental programs and policies.

***Meaningful involvement*** means that:

- People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
- The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
- Community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and
- Decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

***“Energy justice”*** as defined by the Department of Energy (DOE or Department) is “the goal of achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on those disproportionately harmed by the energy system” (Initiative for Energy Justice, 2019). At its core, energy justice applies the basic principles of civil rights to the climate space<sup>1</sup>.

Environmental justice and energy justice are based on the same equitable principles providing EPA and DOE an opportunity to further their common goals and core missions through this RFA.

## **B. Background and Objectives**

The mission of the EPA is to protect human health and the environment for all people with an emphasis on assisting those communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental, climate, and human health harms and risks. EPA, as illustrated by the funding provided under the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) and annual appropriations, intends to make significant investments in the health, equity, and resilience of these, and all communities, to address past, current, and future environmental health and justice challenges. To maximize these significant investments, new and innovative strategies and approaches for issues such as community engagement and participation in environmental programs, equitable distribution of financial resources, capacity-building and outreach, and technical assistance and training to enhance access to financial assistance<sup>2</sup> opportunities and promote effective grants management and performance, are necessary especially for underserved communities that have, and continue to be, plagued by environmental pollution and health, and environmental justice, challenges.

One such strategy is to cooperate with other federal agencies whose mission also includes addressing these types of objectives, such as DOE, which has an added focus on energy justice as noted above. The DOE Equity Action Plan, released in April 2022, is designed to ensure that DOE eliminates barriers to access, and transforms programs and policies to open even broader

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<sup>1</sup> [How Energy Justice, Presidential Initiatives, and Executive Orders Shape Equity at DOE | Department of Energy](#)

<sup>2</sup> Financial assistance includes grants and cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements will be awarded under this RFA, but the terms are used interchangeably in the RFA.

pathways for under-represented groups, including underserved communities, to access DOE resources. Cooperating with EPA to advance shared environmental and energy justice goals furthers DOE's programmatic mission and its commitment to embed equity in its work through all initiatives consistent with the Justice40 Initiative. EPA and DOE intend that the awards to be made under this RFA will be an integral component of government-wide collaborative efforts to support partners with capacity constraints, including underserved communities and rural/remote communities, in accessing federal resources and funding sources, and engaging in decision-making processes to address environmental and energy justice challenges.

Historically, underserved communities have been disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards and health consequences and have faced environmental and energy justice challenges. These communities are often exposed to unhealthy land uses, poor air and water quality, dilapidated housing, lead exposure, and other environmental threats that drive health disparities. Many of these communities are also surrounded by social inequities such as job insecurity, underemployment, linguistic isolation, underperforming schools, noise pollution, crowded homes, face high energy burden or fossil fuel dependence, and lack access to healthy foods and transportation. In addition, they often lack adequate resources and experience to navigate complex grant application and award making processes and have been limited in their ability to have meaningful access to, and participation in, governmental decision-making processes that affect them, including those relating to environmental health and justice, and energy justice. The combination of environmental risks and social inequities creates a cumulative, disproportionate impact that hinders optimal environmental health and justice particularly for these communities.

Consistent with EPA's mission and Administration priorities, including those set forth in Executive Orders 13985 and 14008, and using funding available for environmental justice, as well as potential DOE funding to be provided through an interagency agreement, and other potential funding as available and appropriate, EPA is seeking applications from eligible entities as described in Section III to establish and operate Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (EJ TCTAC). The EJ TCTAC's will provide technical assistance, training, and other eligible forms of assistance, resources, and support (henceforth referred to as "Eligible Services"), as described below, to "program participants (as used throughout this RFA)" including but not limited to:

- Nonprofit organizations
- Community-based and grassroots organizations
- Philanthropic and civic organizations
- Underserved communities and organizations
- Rural and Remote communities and organizations
- Faith-based organizations and churches
- Educational institutions (e.g., schools, colleges, and universities), including Minority Serving Institutions
- Individuals of underserved communities
- Disadvantaged Businesses
- Local, tribal, and state governmental units
- US Territories

- Utility providers
- Health care providers and clinics

While the cooperative agreements expected to be awarded under this RFA are part of a multifaceted approach to benefit all communities facing environmental and energy justice challenges, EPA and DOE are especially interested in the EJ TCTAC's providing Eligible Services to program participants in underserved communities, in rural and remote areas, and to those with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints.

EJ TCTAC's will serve as a resource for program participants interested in participating in environmental and energy justice programs and policy development, and understanding and utilizing environmental and energy grant programs to advance environmental and energy justice. In sum, the purpose of the cooperative agreements to be awarded under this RFA is to provide program participants with Eligible Services such as:

- Guidance, information, and technical assistance to identify and address environmental and energy justice needs and challenges in their community.
- Local environmental justice analyses and the ability to identify environmental justice issues and challenges that need to be addressed such as disposal of solid and hazardous wastes.
- Assistance and training resulting in a strengthened ability to identify, successfully apply for, and effectively manage grants related to environmental and energy justice
- Assistance in navigating government systems used in the grant process such as [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), [EERE Exchange](#), and [OCED Exchange](#).
- Knowledge and understanding of environmental and energy justice-related grant programs and how they can be used to help underserved communities address environmental health, pollution, and justice challenges.
- Assistance to facilitate community engagement and partnership building to address environmental and energy justice issues.
- Translation and interpretation services with respect to grant program awareness and application, award, and management processes to provide program participants a meaningful opportunity to participate in environmental and energy justice efforts
- Knowledge and understanding of federal, state, local, and private foundation grant laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and programmatic requirements, to facilitate understanding of complex grant award making and management processes to enhance their ability to effectively perform and manage grants.
- Assistance and training to have an increased ability to meaningfully participate in decision-making related to environmental and energy justice challenges to ensure that their perspectives, experiences, and expertise inform policy development and program design and delivery at all levels of government and with the private sector; and
- Assistance to build capacity, including strengthening human capital to focus on environmental justice and energy justice issues and fostering third-party "community champions" (e.g., community advocates and volunteer leaders) to engage in decision-making process so they will be in a strengthened position to participate in environmental and energy justice programs and address related challenges.

By increasing program participants, particularly underserved and rural/remote communities, access to and awareness of grant opportunities, knowledge of the grant application and management process, understanding of financing sources and grant requirements, and the ability to participate and engage in environmental and energy justice decision-making, they will be better positioned to advance and address environmental and energy justice issues nation-wide. This will lead to progress towards achieving the objectives of Executive Orders 13985 and 14008.

EPA and DOE also recognize that it is important to engage all available minds to address the environmental and energy justice challenges the nation faces. Accordingly, both agencies want to expand the environmental and energy conversation by including members of communities which may not have previously participated in such dialogues to participate in this technical assistance program. For this reason, EPA and DOE strongly encourage all eligible applicants identified in Section III, including Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), as well as university business schools and business programs, to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this RFA, the following are considered MSIs:

1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#).
2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3) and (d)(1)). A list of these schools can be found at [American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities](#).
3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)). A list of these schools can be found at [Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#).
4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)). A list of these schools can be found at [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions](#); and
5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6). A list of these schools can be found at [Predominately Black Institutions](#).

To find the latest information about the EJ TCTAC program, visit the following link: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-technical-assistance-centers>

### **C. Authority**

Congress provided EPA with both funding and expanded authority to further environmental justice through financial assistance programs in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103), which provided funding for environmental justice implementation and training grants. EPA also has statutory authority to award cooperative agreements for technical assistance for environmental and/or energy justice activities under Section 103 of the Clean Air Act, Section 104 of the Clean Water Act, and Section 8001 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act. In order to receive Section 8001 funding, applicants must specifically address in their applications how they will perform training and public education activities to address environmental harms

caused by solid and hazardous wastes. EPA interprets the term “training” in these statutes to include technical assistance.

DOE has authority to enter into cooperative agreements and other similar transactions that support its functions and missions under Section 646 of the DOE Organization Act of 1977, and, further, to advance clean energy initiatives and related activities under but not limited to the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, the Energy Policy Act of 2005, and the IIJA. Potential DOE funding towards the awards under this RFA is authorized under the IIJA and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022.

Additional and future funding for awards under this RFA is contingent on the availability of future appropriations.

#### **D. Technical Assistance, Training, and Support Activities**

The awards under this RFA will be for the establishment and maintenance of EJ TCTAC’s, with a physical location or a virtual/technological presence, providing the technical assistance, training, and other eligible forms of support summarized above (the Eligible Services), and more fully described below. Consistent with the objectives of this RFA, applicants should describe in their applications and workplan (See Section IV), and will be evaluated based on, the type of Eligible Services they will provide, how they will do so, and how program participants, and especially underserved communities and rural and remote communities, will be made aware of, and can access, the Eligible Services. Applicants are strongly encouraged to design their EJ TCTAC to provide the types of Eligible Services described below to meet the objectives of this RFA.

The Eligible Services to be provided by recipients operating EJ TCTAC’s should be based on accomplishing the following objectives to assist program participants, with a special emphasis on underserved communities and rural and remote communities, with information, tools, and assistance:

- To identify potential grant opportunities (e.g., federal, state, local, or private) related to environmental protection, health, and justice, and energy justice, and subaward (including loans under revolving loan funds) and procurement opportunities under those grants<sup>3</sup>
- On applying for grants related to environmental protection, health, and justice, and energy justice, preparing applications responsive to competitive solicitations, and effectively managing grants from an administrative and programmatic perspective - See Section I.E for limitations on this service.
- On environmental protection, health and justice, and energy justice, programs and policies and information on how to effectively participate in their development.
- For capacity-building support to effectively engage with decisionmakers at all levels of government to ensure that their perspectives, experiences, and expertise inform policy development and program design and delivery on environmental and energy justice issues.

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<sup>3</sup> EPA’s Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) regulation, 40 CFR Part 33, describes EPA requirements for encouraging DBE participation in EPA financial assistance programs.

- For capacity-building support to effectively engage with private sector entities, such as project developers and electric or gas utilities and solid and hazardous waste treatment and disposal facilities, on environmental and energy justice matters to ensure their perspectives, experiences and expertise inform project design and implementation, including through cohort support (e.g., supporting communities with shared objectives and/or characteristics as a group through delivering curated capacity building, training, peer learning and support); and
- To identify, analyze, and understand financing options for pursuing projects, including partnership opportunities, that support environmental and energy justice objectives in coordination with other technical assistance providers to minimize the potential for duplication of effort.

Consistent with these parameters, applicants should design their EJ TCTAC to provide, at a minimum, the Eligible Services described below. Applicants may also propose approaches to addressing each area and service that differs from or supplements what is described below and may propose other types of technical assistance activities that meet the objectives of this RFA in the geographic area(s) they propose to serve as long as the activities are eligible for funding under the appropriate authorities. Priority should be placed on ensuring that efforts are made to make underserved communities, communities in remote and rural areas, and program participants with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints, aware of the EJ TCTAC's and how to access their services.

## **1. Outreach Efforts**

Applicants should describe their plan and approach to make program participants, particularly underserved communities, communities in remote and rural areas, and program participants with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints, aware of their EJ TCTAC and the Eligible Services they intend to provide. Information disseminated through outreach efforts should include at a minimum:

- a. The types of Eligible Services to be offered to program participants.
- b. Instructions on how to access the Eligible Services in a user-friendly and expeditious manner, including in the predominate local language(s).
- c. Information about events, including workshops, seminars, or other training, that the EJ TCTAC plans to offer or participate in that may benefit program participants.

Applicants should design their outreach efforts to reach the widest possible audience and are expected to significantly invest in outreach to underserved communities, communities in remote and rural areas, and to program participants with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints, in their geographic areas. In doing so, they should be building strong local partnerships, allocating resources to employee, contractor, and program participant travel for outreach activities, and creating awareness of the assistance, training, and support/resources to be offered by their EJ TCTAC through social media and/or other types of outreach mechanisms.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to [EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs](#) for information on the allowability of costs for program participant travel and stipends.



## **2. Grant Technical Assistance, Training, Support, and Engagement**

Applicants should demonstrate how they will provide program participants, particularly underserved communities, communities in remote and rural areas, and program participants with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints, with Eligible Services on environmental protection, health, and justice programs, and energy justice programs, and how to participate in them, apply for funding under them, and effectively manage grants administratively and programmatically. This may include but is not limited to assistance with environmental justice issues under air, water, energy, and solid and hazardous waste programs. Applicants should describe how they will provide these services to program participants through the most efficient and effective means practicable and how they will provide translation and other interpretive services to make this assistance available to those not fluent in English or that have limited English proficiency.

In providing the Eligible Services under this RFA, applicants should design an approach intended to assist program participants with assistance and information on:

- a. How to meaningfully engage with governmental decisionmakers and the private sector to ensure that their perspectives, experiences, and expertise inform policy development and program design and delivery on environmental and energy justice issues including issues relating to energy generation, energy efficiency, and solid and hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.
- b. How to find and approach grant and program offices for information, and grantees for contract or subaward opportunities available under grants, to further environmental and energy justice.
- c. How to identify, understand, and analyze financing options to pursue projects that meet environmental and energy justice needs in a manner that minimizes duplication of effort with other federally funded programs.
- d. How to prepare and submit applications for grants for environmental and energy justice projects including helping program participants understand the requirements of competitive solicitations and how to prepare a responsive application to a solicitation - See Section I.E. for limitations on this activity.
- e. How to register, properly use, and access information from government grant systems, including but not limited to the System for Award Management (SAM)<sup>5</sup> at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), Grants.gov at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), [EERE Exchange](#), and [OCED Exchange](#).
- f. Understanding and complying with administrative and programmatic post-award grant functions and responsibilities and federal grant regulations (e.g., 2 CFR Part 200, as adopted and amended by 2 CFR Part 910 and 2 CFR Part 1500, 2 CFR Part 35, 40 CFR Part 35) as well as applicable state regulations and private funding governance.
- g. Any other activities they believe will be effective in providing technical assistance, training, and support to program participants, and especially underserved, rural, and remote communities, to facilitate their participation in funding programs for

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<sup>5</sup> This includes the Entity Information and Assistance Listings sections of SAM.gov.

environmental and energy justice and in the environmental and/or energy decision-making process.

### **3. Community Collaboration, Facilitation, and Engagement Services**

Applicants should design their EJ TCTAC to have the capability to help program participants facilitate meetings with local stakeholders, build partnerships and coalitions, and develop sustainable partnerships with other program participants and stakeholders to advance environmental and energy justice. Collaborations, and relationships with program participants, and especially underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas, are essential to sustainable and effective community work. This includes coordination and/or facilitation services and similar activities for meetings and communications between program participants/underserved, rural and remote communities/other environmental and energy justice stakeholders (e.g., community champions, such as advocates and volunteer leaders, local governmental officials, community groups) to address and discuss environmental protection and justice concerns, energy justice issues, and inform program and policy development and implementation. This approach to collaborations can also include a cohort approach (e.g., supporting communities with shared objectives and/or characteristics as a group through delivering curated capacity building, training, peer learning and support). This activity may also require performing analyses, and preparing reports, identifying environmental justice needs and challenges affecting certain communities and proposing recommendations to address them.

### **4. EJ TCTAC Geographic Coverage and Coordination**

As stated in Section II, EPA intends to award between 5-10 cooperative agreements under this RFA for approximately \$6,000,000 each. Applicants can submit up to three applications under this RFA so long as each one describes the geographic area coverage of their proposed EJ TCTAC (see below), is separately submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), and is for a different geographic area(s) (e.g., an applicant cannot submit three applications for regional geographic area #1). If an applicant submits more than 3 applications, EPA staff will contact the applicant to identify which 3 applications EPA will consider. If an applicant submits multiple applications and is selected for multiple awards, EPA may, if appropriate, combine those selections into one award (See Section VI.D). Any questions about submitting multiple applications should be directed to the contact identified in Section VII prior to application submission.

The geographic areas are:

- Regional Geographic Area #1** includes *EPA Region 1* (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)
- Regional Geographic Area #2** includes *EPA Region 2* (NJ, NY, PR, VI)
- Regional Geographic Area #3** includes *EPA Region 3* (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV)
- Regional Geographic Area #4** includes *EPA Region 4* (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN)
- Regional Geographic Area #5** includes *EPA Region 5* (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)
- Regional Geographic Area #6** includes *EPA Region 6* (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)
- Regional Geographic Area #7** includes *EPA Region 7* (IA, KS, NE, MO)
- Regional Geographic Area #8** includes *EPA Region 8* (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY)
- Regional Geographic Area #9** includes *EPA Region 9* (AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU)

- Regional Geographic Area #10** includes *EPA Region 10* (AK, ID, OR, WA)
- Nationwide Geographic Area**

Applicants should design an approach to ensure that Eligible Services are provided to program participants throughout the entire geographic area covered by their award including to rural and remote areas. Please note that the amount of funding provided to selected applicants will be commensurate with the level and amount of Eligible Services to be provided under the award. Those selected applicants providing less Eligible Services may receive lower amounts of funding than recipients providing greater amounts or serving a larger geographic area.

Applicants selected for award in a particular geographic area may also provide with EPA's approval Eligible Services to program participants in other geographical areas. For example, a recipient may provide technical assistance to an underserved community or organizations in a remote area outside its geographic area if it is uniquely qualified to provide a specific type of technical assistance, or if requested by a program participant, as determined by the EPA Project Officer. The final scope of work that EPA's Project Officer negotiates with successful applicants will specify the terms under which recipients may provide assistance outside of their geographic areas.

Accordingly, it is expected that there will be multiple awards resulting from this competition and providing assistance outside of the geographic area of an award may be necessary. Applicants should describe how they would provide coverage outside the geographic area of their award, collaborate with other EJ TCTAC's and with other technical assistance providers (e.g., EPA Environmental Finance Centers and Technical Assistance for Brownfields recipients) to avoid duplication of effort, and share best practices among EJ TCTAC's to maximize the value of the Eligible Services provided to program participants as envisioned by this RFA. This may include such things as including links on their EJ TCTAC website to help prospective and existing program participants determine which EJ TCTAC to access, and how to do so. Additionally, as provided in EPA's General Terms and Conditions "Copyrighted Material and Data" (a link to which can be found in Section VI.w of EPA's solicitation provisions-see Section I.G), EPA may authorize all EJ TCTAC's to use copyrighted works or other data developed with Agency funds by other EJ TCTAC's when such use promotes efficient and effective use of Federal grant funds.

## **5. Resources To Operate the EJ TCTAC**

Applicants should have the appropriate staff (e.g., project manager and other key personnel), resources, organizational expertise and experience, knowledge, and administrative/programmatic infrastructure necessary to provide the Eligible Services described above, either through their own organization and/or through the ability to obtain it through properly procured contracts, authorized subawards, or other appropriate non-financial partnerships and collaborative mechanisms. This also includes the technical competency and knowledge of how to use government grant systems (e.g., [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), [EERE Exchange](#)), and the ability to interpret and translate grant requirements, policies and procedures into plain language and other languages besides English as necessary.

Applicants should also describe their plan and approach for establishing their EJ TCTAC to ensure that the Eligible Services described above will be able to start being provided to program participants, especially underserved, rural, and remote communities, as expeditiously as possible following award. Note that EPA will include a “sufficient progress” term and condition in all EJ TCTAC awards that will require recipients to meet specified benchmarks for project implementation in a timely manner.

Applicants should also describe the facility(s), website presence, virtual means, or other technological abilities and means/tools for providing the Eligible Services described above to program participants that is easily accessible to all of them particularly underserved communities and communities in remote and rural areas. This should include ensuring that the EJ TCTAC will be accessible to program participants during normal business hours and the recipient should be able to, if necessary, adjust their accessibility and hours to meet the needs of program participants including underserved communities, communities in remote and rural areas, those in different time zones than that of the recipient, and/or those with internet or other technological challenges that may affect their ability to access EJ TCTAC services. Applicants should also describe how their EJ TCTAC website will contain relevant grant technical assistance, training, and support/research information including links to relevant grant and environmental program laws, regulations, policies and procedures (e.g., [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), [EERE Exchange](http://EERE.Exchange)), environmental justice resources (e.g., Executive Orders, governmental documents), state and private funding, and EJ TCTAC events/training.

## **6. EJ TCTAC Results, Success Stories, and Feedback**

To facilitate program effectiveness, applicants should describe an approach for documenting and measuring the success of their EJ TCTAC, which may include information on success stories attesting to the Eligible Services provided to program participants and make this information available to EPA upon request. A success story is generally one that demonstrates an effort of the EJ TCTAC to help a program participant that generated a grant or other financial award, engagement by program participants to inform environmental or energy justice decision-making, or similar successes or benefits to a program participant.

Applicants should also describe an approach for seeking feedback on their EJ TCTAC from program participants and prospective program participants, that includes their satisfaction with the EJ TCTAC, ideas on ways to make it more effective and additional types of assistance it should consider providing (e.g., technical assistance should be a “two-way street”), and what steps the applicant will take to address the feedback to improve the operation of the EJ TCTAC. Applicants should make a concerted effort to obtain relevant feedback on their EJ TCTAC from underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas. If the applicant intends to use EPA or DOE funds to develop and administer surveys or other information collections subject to 5 CFR Part 1320 for feedback, compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act by EPA may be necessary.

## **7. Energy Justice Activities**

Applicants should explain how their EJ TCTAC will provide the following energy justice technical assistance, training and capacity building activities to program participants, and especially underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas, and those in proximity to current and former mine land:

- Identifying energy justice objectives that are aligned with a clean energy transition including community opportunities and assets to advance these objectives and transition through clean energy demonstration, deployment, workforce development, and outreach projects, including on current and former mine lands.
- Identifying, understanding, and analyzing financing options, including public-private partnerships and innovative financing structures, to pursue clean energy demonstration, deployment, workforce development, and outreach projects that meet energy justice needs.
- Creating effective materials to enable underserved communities to collaborate with the private sector and investors, including venture and angel investors, public and philanthropic organizations, on clean energy demonstration, deployment, workforce development and outreach opportunities that advance energy justice objectives and the clean energy transition

#### **E. Ineligible Activities**

The following are examples of ineligible activities under the awards to be made from this RFA<sup>6</sup>

- General business training or financial assessments including assistance with business plans or marketing. For example, EJ TCTAC's cannot offer training, advice, or assistance on topics such as human resources, hiring, retention, health care, quality certifications, Lean, Six Sigma, or manufacturing, except where the assistance specifically relates to compliance with grant requirements
- Recipients acting as the program participant's representative (e.g., recipients cannot call federal or state personnel and assert that they speak for program participants or call a help desk and act as if they are the program participant). Recipients must maintain their role as providing assistance, training, and support/resources to program participants and not act as their representatives in communications with other parties.
- Training (e.g., vocational type training) for program participant personnel unrelated to the purpose of an EJ TCTAC.
- Assistance in establishing a new organization, business, entity
- Legal advice, services, or representation
- Funding from EPA and DOE may not be used by EJ TCTAC recipients for the writing and/or submittal of individual grant applications for, or on behalf of, program participants to a requesting entity. EPA funds, however, may be used by EJ TCTAC recipients to provide assistance to program participants on preparing applications for funding which includes providing assistance or "tips" to strengthen an application to

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<sup>6</sup> This is not an exhaustive list of ineligible activities. All activities receiving EPA and DOE funding are subject to requirements for cost allowability in applicable regulations including limitations on consultant fees in 2 CFR Part 1500. Additionally, only activities described in the EPA approved scope of work are eligible for funding.

enhance its competitiveness and responsiveness to funding opportunity announcements. Conversely, DOE funds may not be used by EJ TCTAC recipients for any assistance to program participants in connection with preparing, reviewing, negotiating, or submitting any application or workplan for DOE funding, or to provide support regarding the administrative policies and requirements, cost principles, or audit requirements for individual DOE awards. Any form of eligible technical assistance from recipients to program participants on how to prepare and submit applications does not guarantee a program participant will receive funding. See Section VI.C for additional information on requirements to separately track and report on DOE funding and EPA funding.

## **F. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outputs, Outcomes and Performance Measures**

This announcement supports key priorities of the Administration as detailed in [Executive Order 13985](#) signed by President Biden on January 20, 2021 titled, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, and [Executive Order 14008](#) signed by President Biden on January 27, 2021, titled *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. Specifically, the projects selected under this RFA will support the federal government's efforts to advance racial equity and environmental and energy justice, address health outcome disparities, and support underserved communities.

In addition, pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," (see <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-order-57007a1-epas-policy-environmental-results-under-epa-assistance-agreements>), EPA must link assistance agreements to the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA's current Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

The activities to be funded under this RFA support the [FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#). Awards made under this RFA will support Goal 2 (Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights), Objective 2.1, (Promote Environmental Justice and Civil Rights at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Levels) of the Strategic Plan which states that: "*Building Community Capacity and Climate Resilience and Maximizing Benefits to Overburdened and Underserved Communities: EPA will increase support for community-led action by providing unprecedented investments and benefits directly to communities with environmental justice concerns and by integrating equity throughout Agency programs.*" Applicants should explain in their application how their project will further this goal and objective and they will be evaluated on this under the evaluation criteria in Section V.A.

EPA Order 5700.7 also requires that applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements. Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the goals and objectives described above.

1. **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 or provided over a period or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of expected outputs from projects may include the following:

- The number of program participants, including underserved communities, utilizing the services of an EJ TCTAC.
- Documented outreach efforts (e.g., webinars, in-person workshops, conference presentations) undertaken by an EJ TCTAC to make program participants and especially underserved communities and communities in remote and rural areas aware of their services.
- Tools developed by an EJ TCTAC to ensure that their services are accessible to program participants and especially underserved communities and communities in remote and rural areas.
- Reports on feedback received from program participants including underserved communities and communities in remote and rural areas to improve the operability of an EJ TCTAC.
- Reports on program evaluations for measuring the success of an EJ TCTAC in meeting the objectives of this RFA as described above.
- Number of improvements made to an EJ TCTAC based on feedback from program participants.
- Number of clean energy demonstration opportunities identified that advance energy justice objectives and are aligned with a clean energy transition.
- Any other appropriate and relevant outputs identified by applicants that contribute to the objectives of this RFA.

2. **Outcomes.** The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that relates to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature; must be quantitative; and may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Additionally, outcomes should be organized by expected time period (short-term, intermediate, and long-term). Short-term outcomes refer to changes in knowledge or attitudes and usually occur during the project period.

Intermediate outcomes refer to changes in behaviors and actions due to the knowledge acquired and are usually measured within several months after the end of the project. Long-term outcomes refer to changes in conditions and are measured a year or several years after project completion. Short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes are related and build on one another. EPA encourages recipients to identify outcomes wherever possible because they lead to environmental and/or public health improvement more clearly than outputs.

Examples of expected outcomes from projects may include the following:

- Increase in the number, quality, and responsiveness of applications for funding submitted to Federal, state, and private sector (e.g., philanthropic foundations)

- funding sources by underserved communities.
- Increased stakeholder participation in EPA and DOE programs and in private sector decision-making impacting environmental (e.g., solid and hazardous waste) and energy justice.
- Increase in the number, quality, and responsiveness of applications received for EPA competitive grant awards including increases in applications from underserved communities.
- Increased stakeholder participation in EPA and DOE programs.
- More efficient and effective grant administration, performance, and management by program participants resulting in fewer questioned costs, audits, and performance issues.
- Decrease in the number of questions and issues received by EPA staff related to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).
- Decrease in late application submissions based on better understanding of the application process.
- Increase in stakeholder participation in DOE programs, including those targeted at rural and remote communities or in proximity to current and former mine land.
- Any other appropriate and relevant outcomes identified by applicants contributing to the goals of this RFA.

**3. Performance Measurement Plan.** Applicants should describe how they plan to track and monitor their project performance and progress throughout the project period including their success in meeting the expected outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes are critical components of an applicant’s overall plan for measuring their project’s performance. Applicants will be evaluated on the quality of their overall performance measurement plan including the proposed outputs, outcomes, and associated timeframes for achieving those results. Generally, higher quality performance measurement plans include specific target metrics where possible for both outputs and outcomes. The applicant’s performance measurement plan will help gather insights, will be the mechanism to track successful progress, output and outcome strategies, and will provide the basis for developing lessons learned to inform future recipients.

The following questions are also useful to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the EJ TCTAC will achieve?
- How does the EJ TCTAC measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?
- Are the projected outputs and outcomes specific and detailed? Are specific target measures included where possible? Are target measures reasonable and achievable within the project period and for the funding amount?

## **G. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Announcement**



Additional provisions that apply to sections III, IV, V, and VI of this RFA and/or awards made under this RFA, can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#). These provisions are important for applying to this RFA and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this RFA. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact listed in this RFA (usually in Section VII) to obtain the provisions.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION** ([back to Contents by Section](#))

### **A. Funding Availability and Period of Performance**

EPA, with potential DOE funding, anticipates providing a total of \$50 million in funding under this RFA. EPA expects to make between 5 to 10 incrementally funded awards with periods of performance of three years with total funding of approximately \$6 million per award depending on funding availability, the quality of applications, satisfactory progress, and other applicable considerations. The specific number of awards and the amounts may vary from these estimates.

For application submission purposes, applicants should prepare budgets for up to approximately \$6 million over three years with up to approximately \$2 million budgeted for each year. The amount of incremental funding available in subsequent years will depend on funding availability, satisfactory progress, and other applicable considerations with the understanding that EPA's Project Officer will negotiate the amount of the final budget based on these considerations.

### **B. Number, Type, and Period of Performance of Anticipated Awards**

It is anticipated that between 5 –10 awards will be incrementally funded under this RFA. The awards for selected projects will be in the form of cooperative agreements because the EJTCTAC program requires substantial involvement and interaction between the applicant and EPA and DOE. Although EPA in consultation with DOE will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:

- Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
- In accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, review of proposed procurements;
- Reviewing qualifications of key personnel (EPA and DOE will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- Review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

EPA and DOE do not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient or subrecipients. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

Applicants should plan for the period of performance for awards to begin on **February 1, 2023**. All awards are subject to the availability of funds, the quality of the applications submitted, and other applicable considerations.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions of the proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicant or affect the basis upon which the application was evaluated and selected for award, thereby maintaining the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA also reserves the right to make additional awards under this RFA, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION** ([back to Contents by Section](#))

**Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#).**

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

EPA has limited eligibility for this funding opportunity under Assistance Listing 66.309 to the following eligible entities as permitted by the applicant eligibility section of the listing which allows EPA to limit eligibility to a subset of eligible applicants:

- Public and private universities and colleges
- Public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations (includes institutions of higher education such as community colleges, and philanthropic organizations),
- Intertribal Consortia - *a coalition between two or more Indian tribal governments authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance and participate in self-governance*

Consistent with the definition of *Nonprofit organization* at 2 CFR 200.1, the term “nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. Note that 2 CFR 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a nonprofit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible. Eligible nonprofit organizations may, but are not required to be, exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code. Workforce Investment

Boards and organized Labor Unions that meet these criteria may be eligible nonprofit organizations.

Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(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. For-profit organizations or trade schools are also not eligible to apply.

The following entities are **INELIGIBLE** to receive an award under this RFA, but applicants may work with these organizations, as appropriate and provided any financial transactions comply with applicable regulatory and policy requirements for competition (see [Contracts and Subawards announcement clause](#) referenced in Section IV.d of EPA's Announcement Clauses which are referenced in Section I.G), for their project and operation of their EJ TCTAC:

- state and local governments and their agencies and instrumentalities;
- state recognized tribes;
- federal tribes
- US Territories and possessions
- hospitals;
- for-profit businesses;
- quasi-governmental entities (e.g., water districts, utilities);<sup>7</sup>
- International organizations
- Individuals

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds**

No costsharing or matching is required as a condition of eligibility under this competition.

### **C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

All applications must meet the eligibility requirements described in Sections III.A., B., and C. to be considered eligible for award. 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. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this RFA or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. In addition to any page limitations, applicants

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<sup>7</sup> Generally, a quasi-governmental entity is one that: (1) has a close association with the government agency, but is not considered a part of the government agency; (2) was created by the government agency, but is exempt from certain legal and administrative requirements imposed on government agencies; or (3) was not created by the government agency but performs a public purpose and is significantly supported financially by the government agency.

are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence with respect to such things as font type and size.

2. Initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this RFA (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this RFA. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this RFA to ensure that their application is properly and timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in the Section IV.A grants.gov instructions, which includes both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

3. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov). An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission outside of Grants.gov. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Jacob Burney, [Burney.Jacob@epa.gov](mailto:Burney.Jacob@epa.gov) as soon as possible after submission —failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed

**DO NOT WAIT! Register in SAM.gov and Grants.gov as soon as possible. Finalizing these registrations could take a month or more. You do not want a late registration to prevent you from being able to properly and timely submit your application through Grants.gov.**

4. Applications must be written in English only. Applications written in languages other than English will be deemed ineligible for funding.

5. Ineligible Activities: If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, including but not limited to those described in Section I.E, 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. Funds awarded under this RFA may not be used to support lobbying activities as provided in 2 CFR 200.450. Subawards made to 501(c)(4) nonprofit organizations that lobby are not allowed.

6. Multiple Applications: Applicants can submit up to three applications under this RFA so long as each one describes the geographic coverage of the proposed EJ TCTAC, is separately submitted through Grants.gov, and is for a different geographic area(s) (e.g., an applicant cannot submit three applications for geographic area 1). If an applicant submits more than 3 applications, EPA staff will contact the applicant to identify which 3 applications EPA will consider. Notwithstanding the above, an applicant may be a partner on another application from another eligible organization.

#### **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION** ([back to Contents by Section](#))

**Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#).**

## **A. Requirement to Submit through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures**

### 1. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this RFA based on the grants.gov instructions below. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception from applying through Grants.gov for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined [here](#). Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with submissions with respect to this RFA only are addressed in section 3, *Technical Issues with Submission*, below.

### 2. Submission Instructions

#### a. SAM.gov (System for Award Management) Registration Instructions

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will need to create an account using [login.gov](#)<sup>8</sup> to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registration includes obtaining a Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining a UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Question](#) on the difference for additional details.

Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your 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.

#### b. [Grants.gov Registration Instructions](#)

Once your SAM.gov account is active, you must register in Grants.gov. Grants.gov will

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<sup>8</sup> Login.gov a secure sign in service used by the public to sign into Federal Agency systems including SAM.gov and Grants.gov. For help with login.gov accounts you should visit <http://login.gov/help>.

electronically receive your organization information, such as e-Business (EBiz) point of contact email address and UEI. Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active Grants.gov registration. Grants.gov registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal grant before, please review the [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#) instructions. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, the EBiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to members of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in Grants.gov. Please review the [Intro to Grants.gov-Understanding User Roles](#) and [Learning Workspace – User Roles and Workspace Actions](#) for details on this important process.

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. 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 application submission deadline.

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

#### c. Application Submission Process

To begin the application process under this RFA, go to [Grants.gov](#) and click the red “Apply” button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.

The electronic submission of your application to this RFA must be made by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance. If the submit button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization’s EBiz point of contact or contact [Grants.gov](#) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants need to ensure that the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

#### Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](#) no later than **October 4, 2022**, at 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through Grants.gov does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

### 3. Technical Issues with Submission

If applicants experience technical issues during the submission of an application that they are unable to resolve, follow these procedures **before** the application deadline date:

- a. Contact the Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.
- b. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.
- c. Send an email with **EPA-I-OP-OEJ-22-02** in the subject line to [burney.jacob@epa.gov](mailto:burney.jacob@epa.gov) **before** the application deadline time and include the following information:
  1. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
  2. Description of the issue
  3. The entire application package in PDF format

Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit the application prior to the application submission deadline time and date because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is **not** an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov.

### 4. Application Materials

**The following forms and documents are required under this RFA:**

#### **Mandatory Documents:**

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Preaward Compliance Review Report (Please see these [Useful Tips](#) for completing this form)

5. Project Narrative Attachment Form: Use this to submit your Workplan, prepared as described in Section IV.B below. Please note the page limit that applies to the Workplan identified below.
6. Use the Other Attachments Form for the following additional mandatory documents:
  - Itemized Budget Sheet (See below in Section IV.B.2 and optional template in Appendix A)
  - Partnership Letters of Commitment (unless you are proposing a project with no partners) (See Section IV.B.1 below)
  - Resumes of the Project Manager (PM) and other key personnel (See Section IV.B.3 below)

**Optional Documents:**

Use the Other Attachments Form for the following optional document:

- Information on Endowment Size and/or Yearly Organizational Budget (See IV.B.4 below)

Note: The “Other Attachments Form” is listed under the mandatory documents but should be used to attach both the mandatory documents listed above in 6 as well as any optional documents under 6.

**B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

The forms and documents required as part of the application submission are described in Section IV.A above. Below are the instructions for the Workplan and several other application documents.

**1. Workplan:** The Workplan is one of the most important parts of the application package and describes the work to be performed during the performance period. Under this RFA, applicants must submit a Workplan for a federal award that addresses how the applicant’s EJ TCTAC will meet the objectives of this RFA, perform the activities and provide the services described in Section I of the RFA (the Eligible Services), and also ensure that it addresses the evaluation criteria in Section V.A and any applicable threshold eligibility criteria in Section III. The Workplan must not exceed (20) single-spaced typewritten pages and be on letter size pages (8 1/2 X 11 inches). Any pages beyond twenty (20) pages will not be read by the review panel. It is recommended that applicants use a standard font (e.g., Times New Roman, Calibri, and Arial) and a 12-point font size. While these guidelines establish the acceptable type size requirements, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the application. Other attachments such as resumes, partnership letters, itemized budget template, and information on endowment size and/or yearly organizational budget can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 20-page Workplan limit.

Workplans must address the information described above. Make sure they also include the following information which is part of the 20-page Workplan page limit:

- a. **Project Summary Page** – Recommended not to exceed one page and include:



- Project Title
- Project Geographic Area-See Section I.D.4
- Applicant Information (name, address, main contact information)
- Brief Description of Applicant Organization -- Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization, including its mission and key ongoing projects/activities in which it is involved.
- List of Project Partners -- include partner name and stakeholder group. For example, State University (academic); County commissioner (local government); Local church (faith-based), Local supplier (business/industry), etc.).
- Project Abstract -- Brief description of the main objective, activities, and outputs/outcomes of the project, including the specific geographic areas of focus.

**b. Partnerships, Collaboration, and Letters of Commitment** (See evaluation factor V.A.1.c)

Partnerships and collaboration with other interested stakeholders in performance of the project are integral to the success of the EJ TCTAC program but must comply with regulatory requirements described below if federal funds will be used to compensate partners. Given the nature of this program, failure to demonstrate effective partnerships or collaboration with other stakeholders may adversely impact the applicant's scoring under the relevant evaluation criteria in Section V.A and may render the application less competitive than others that include partnerships and collaboration. If an applicant does not demonstrate such partnerships or collaboration, they must be able to convincingly demonstrate in their application how they can effectively perform the project, and establish and operate the EJ TCTAC, without any partners or collaboration.

All letters of commitment for partnerships and collaborations must be submitted by the applicant with its application package by the submission deadline. The letters of commitment must be included as other attachments in the grants.gov application package (Section IV.A) and are not subject to the 20-page Workplan limit. The letters of commitment should include information about the role and activities each partner will play in establishment and operation of the EJ TCTAC as well as any resources the partner will provide. The letters of commitment must be signed by the partnering organizations. Do not include generic letters of support or recommendation. Regardless of the source, generic letters of support will not be considered in evaluating applications. If no letters of commitment are included, then it will be assumed the applicant has no partners and they must demonstrate how they can effectively perform the project and establish/operate the EJ TCTAC without partners or collaboration.

In addition, groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subrecipients of the recipient (the "pass-through entity"). *Subawards* must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR 200.1 and comply with EPA's [Subaward Policy](#). The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of

contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 CFR 200.332, subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for proper use of EPA funding.

For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards under this grant program but may receive procurement contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 CFR 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants. Refer to the [Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. **Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a “partner” or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements.**

Note: If you intend to fund a named or unnamed partner’s participation in the project your application must describe how the proposed financial transaction complies with applicable requirements in 2 CFR Part 200, EPA’s Subaward Policy, the Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements or EPA Guidance on [Participant Support Costs](#). Note that naming a contractor (including a consultant) as a “partner” does not relieve the applicant from complying with competitive procurement requirements. EPA does not accept sole source contract justifications for professional services (including environmental consulting services and consulting services on preparing grant applications) that are available in the commercial marketplace.

### **c. Past Performance**

Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements that your organization performed within the last three years. Assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements, but not contracts. List no more than 5 agreements. For the agreements you list, 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.A, 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 your organization does not have any available past performance experience related to federal and/or non-federal assistance agreements, you should state this explicitly in your application (e.g., *Our organization has no past grants experience.*) Including this statement will ensure you receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points).

However, if you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

**2. Itemized Budget Template (Optional template available in Appendix A):** Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amount for each project component/activity. Identify the requested federal dollars. Applicants should budget for up to \$6,000,000 of funding over three years at \$2,000,000 per year (keep in mind that EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions of the proposed projects). Clearly explain how the funds will be used. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. All subaward funding should be located under the “other” category. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget such as “other” and contractual. Provide itemized costs with sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of costs for each workplan component/activity. Where necessary, your itemized budget sheet should include a budget narrative to make it clear how you determined/calculated the costs for each budget category.

In addition, demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the project in terms of maximizing to the greatest extent practicable the delivery of the Eligible Services to program participants, including underserved, rural, and remote communities, as described in Section I.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f), recipients that do not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate under 10% are eligible for a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs for all Federal awards. Please see EPA’s IDC Policy: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/documents/indirect-cost-policy-for-recipients-of-epa-assistance-agreements.pdf> for full details.

Total estimated costs in the itemized budget template should reflect federal funding only. Applicants are permitted to attach the itemized budget template as an “Other Attachment” to their application and it will not count against the 20-page workplan limit. Applicants will not be penalized if they choose not to use the budget template.

**3. Resumes of the Project Manager (PM) and Other Key Personnel:** Applicants should attach a resume or curricula vitae (CV) for the PM and other key personnel named on the Key Contacts List. These are not subject to the Workplan page limit although individual resumes should not exceed 2 pages in length.

**4. Information on Endowment Size and/or Yearly Organizational Budget:** Applicants should attach documentation (no more than 2 pages) providing details related to the size of the organization’s total endowments (if any) and/or the total yearly budget for the organization. The information submitted should provide endowment and organizational budget information for the three most recent full fiscal years for the applying entity. EPA may consider this information under the organizational diversity other factor described in Section V.B of this RFA. Applicants should attach this documentation as an “Other Attachment” to their application as described in Section IV.A and it will not count against the workplan page limit.

### C. Pre-Application Webinars and Frequently Asked Questions

Applicants are invited to participate in webinars with EPA and DOE to address questions about the EJ TCTAC Program and this RFA. Interested persons may access the webinars listed in the table below. Additional information including a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, webinar links, and webinar recordings can be found at the following website: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-technical-assistance-centers>

Currently, as shown in the table below, there will be two webinars in August 2022. Webinar dates and times may be subject to change, so please refer to the web links in this section to have the most up-to-date information:

Date	Time (Eastern Time)	Zoom Webinar Information
<p align="center"><b>August 16, 2022</b>  (EJ TCTAC Live Webinar)</p>	<p align="center">2:00pm - 3:30pm ET</p>	<p><b>Zoom Webinar Format</b> - Applicants may ask general questions about this RFA.</p> <p><b>Visit the following link for log-in information:</b> <a href="#">EJ TCTAC RFA Information Page</a></p>
<p align="center"><b>August 25, 2022</b>  (EJ TCTAC Live Webinar)</p>	<p align="center">2:00pm – 3:30pm ET</p>	<p><b>Zoom Webinar Format</b> - Applicants may ask general questions about this RFA.</p> <p><b>Visit the following link for log-in information:</b> <a href="#">EJ TCTAC RFA Information Page</a></p>

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy ([EPA Order 5700.5A1](#)), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria.

Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. In

addition, EPA will respond to questions about whether a proposed project appears to meet the criteria for eligibility for consideration for these awards.

**V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION** ([back to Contents by Section](#))

**Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#).**

**A. Merit Evaluation Criteria**

Eligible applications that pass the threshold eligibility review described in Section III.C will be reviewed and scored by a review panel(s) comprised of EPA staff, and possibly staff from other Federal agencies, using the criterion below. The maximum total number of points is 100. Please note that certain sections are worth more points than others.

Applicants must ensure that their Workplan and application materials address the evaluation criteria below. Applications will be scored based on how well they address the following ranking criteria:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
			<b>100</b>
1.0	<b>Program Objectives</b>	Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they address program objectives (Section I of the RFA) by demonstrating:	<b>62</b>

a.	<b>Program Design &amp; Operation of the EJ TCTAC</b>	<p>How the applicant will establish and operate an EJ TCTAC that provides the type of Eligible Services described in Section I of the RFA. This includes evaluating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant’s plan and approach for establishing the EJ TCTAC and ensuring it can provide the Eligible Services described in Section I to program participants throughout the geographic area it covers <b>(4 points)</b></li> <li>• The types of Eligible Services to be provided by the EJ TCTAC consistent with the descriptions in Section I, how they will be provided, and how they will help advance the objectives of this RFA to enhance the ability of program participants, and especially those from underserved, rural, and remote communities, and program participants with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints, apply for and effectively manage grants, and engage with EPA, DOE, and other governmental, and private, decision-makers to inform decision-making and address environmental and energy justice challenges <b>(10 points)</b></li> <li>• How the applicant will obtain, and incorporate as appropriate, feedback from program participants including underserved communities, on the operation of the EJ TCTAC and ways to improve it <b>(3 points)</b></li> <li>• How the applicant will provide the Eligible Services described in Section I to program participants not fluent in English <b>(2 points)</b></li> <li>• The applicants plan and approach for delivering energy justice related technical assistance, training and capacity building activities including those identified in Section I.D.7 to program participants, with a focus on communities in rural and remote areas and those in proximity to current and former mine land, including how expenditures will be tracked consistent with descriptions in Section I.D.7 <b>(5 points)</b></li> <li>• The applicants plan for coordinating with other EJ TCTAC’s and Federally funded technical assistance providers (e.g., EPA Environmental Finance Centers, Technical Assistance for Brownfields cooperative agreement recipients) to avoid duplication of effort and share best practices to maximize the value of the</li> </ul>	28
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Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
		technical assistance, training, and support/resources envisioned by this RFA <b>(4 points)</b>	
b.	<b>Outreach to Underserved, Rural, Remote, and Capacity Constrained Communities</b>	<p>The applicant’s approach for ensuring that the Eligible Services described in Section I are accessible to underserved communities, communities in remote and rural areas, and program participants with the highest degree of burden and capacity constraints. This includes evaluating the quality and extent of the applicant’s plan and approach for making these communities and program participants aware of the EJ TCTAC’s services and how to access them, and how the EJ TCTAC’s services can be used to enhance their ability to participate in environmental and energy justice-related decision-making at governmental levels to inform decision-making and delivery of services, and with private sector entities, to inform project design and implementation. Applicants will also be evaluated on their plan to ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) are incorporated in their outreach plans.</p> <p><b>(8 points)</b></p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Under this criterion an applicant will only score well if they demonstrate how all the entities described above, including communities in rural and remote areas, will be made aware of the EJ TCTAC’s services and how to access them. Applications that focus on providing services solely to, for example, underserved communities in metropolitan areas, will not score as well as applications that address all the communities and program participants identified above.</p>	8

c.	<b>Partnerships / Collaboration / Letters of Commitment</b>	<p>How the proposed project for the EJ TCTAC includes collaboration with partners from stakeholder groups such as industry, business, academia (e.g., Minority Serving Institutions, business schools/programs), government, philanthropic organizations, and underserved communities, to operate an efficient and effective EJ TCTAC to meet the objectives of this RFA and address environmental and energy justice challenges facing program participants and specifically underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas. This includes evaluating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the planned roles of each partner listed in the application</li> <li>• how each partner will contribute to the effectiveness of the project</li> <li>• what resources each partner brings to the project</li> <li>• how the partner has a vested interest in working with this partnership (other than just getting income from a sub-award or contract)</li> </ul> <p>Applicants who do not propose partnerships or collaboration with others will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate that they can effectively and efficiently perform the project and operate their EJ TCTAC on their own without any collaborating partners. <b>(8 points)</b></p> <p>The quality of the letters of commitment submitted with the application. The letters will be evaluated with respect to whether they explain the partners’ role in the EJ TCTAC and how it contributes towards the effectiveness of the EJ TCTAC, what resources (funding, in-kind, technical assistance, support, expertise, etc.) the partners are bringing to the effort, how their participation will be financed, their interest in the EJ TCTAC, and their expertise/experience in helping underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas. Generic letters of support that do not commit an organization or individual to specific activities will not be evaluated. If no letters are submitted and the applicant proposes to perform the EJ TCTAC without any partners, they will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate that they can effectively and efficiently perform the project and operate their EJ TCTAC on their own without partners. <b>(6 points)</b></p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Given the objectives and scope of the program described in Section I of this RFA, partnerships and collaboration with other interested stakeholders in performance of the project and</p>	14
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Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
		<p>establishment and operation of an EJ TCTAC is important and will be evaluated. Notwithstanding this, if an applicant does not intend to partner or collaborate with others in project performance and establishment/operation of their EJ TCTAC, their application must demonstrate how they can effectively and efficiently perform the objectives of this RFA as described in Section I without any partners or collaboration. If an application has no commitment letters and does not demonstrate how the applicant can effectively and efficiently perform the project and establish/operate their EJ TCTAC without partners or collaboration, they will not be evaluated favorably under this criterion.</p>	
d.	<b>Community Collaboration, Facilitation, and History of Community Engagement</b>	<p>The applicant’s plan to facilitate community collaboration and partnership-building, as well as an evaluation of the applicant’s history of work, relationships, collaboration, and service to underserved communities and rural and remote communities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their plan and approach for helping underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas facilitate meetings with local stakeholders, build partnerships and coalitions, and develop sustainable partnerships with other interested parties to advance environmental and energy justice, including clean energy demonstration projects aligned with energy justice and clean energy transition community objectives <b>(5 points)</b>.</li> <li>• Their past and current work, collaborations, and relationships with underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas to address environmental and energy justice challenges and how they plan to do so in the future to enhance these communities’ ability to engage with governmental and other organizations to address related challenges <b>(5 points)</b>.</li> </ul>	10

Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
e.	<b>Project Linkages</b>	<p>The extent and quality to which the proposed project activities support and advance EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 (Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights), Objective 2.1, (Promote Environmental Justice and Civil Rights at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Levels) <b>(2 points)</b></p> <p>Refer to link Below: <a href="https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan">https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan</a></p>	2
2.	<p><b>Project Activities / Milestone Schedule / Detailed Budget Narrative</b> Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they:</p>		<b>12</b>
a.	Schedule of Activities	<p>Provide a clearly articulated and realistic schedule, including timeframes to initiate and perform project activities, and describe the plan and approach for establishing the EJ TCTAC to ensure that the Eligible Services described in Section I will be able to start being provided to program participants, especially underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas, as expeditiously as possible following award. (4 points)</p> <p>Including a table in the application to represent the timeframes for the initiation and completion of project activities is recommended.</p>	4
b.	Budget and Cost Effectiveness of Budget/Project	<p>Demonstrate the reasonableness of the budget and allowability of the costs for each component/activity of the project. In addition, EPA will evaluate the cost effectiveness of the budget/project in terms of maximizing to the greatest extent practicable the delivery of the services and assistance to program participants, and specifically to underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas. (8 points)</p> <p><i>Applicants are permitted to attach the itemized budget sheet as an "Other Attachment" to their application so it will not count against the 20-page workplan limit.</i></p>	8

Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
3.	<b>Environmental and Energy Justice Results— Outputs, Outcomes, and Performance Measurement Plan.</b> Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which:		<b>8</b>
a.	Environmental and Energy Justice Results- Outputs/ Outcomes	<p>The applicant describes an effective plan for tracking and measuring their progress in achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs <b>(3 points)</b></p> <p>The expected project outputs and outcomes identified in the application are effective in achieving the program objectives listed in Section I of the RFA <b>(5 points)</b></p>	8
4.	<b>Programmatic Capability</b>		<b>12</b>
a.	Organizational experience	Their organizational experience related to performing the Eligible Services described in Section I, or similar activities. <b>(4 points)</b>	4
b.	Staff Experience / Qualifications	Whether they demonstrate they have the resources and staff (e.g., project manager and other key personnel) with the knowledge, expertise, and skills to efficiently and effectively establish and operate their EJ TCTAC to provide the Eligible Services described in Section I including knowledge and experience with federal, EPA, DOE, state and private (e.g., private foundations) grant requirements, and the technical competency and knowledge on how to use government grant systems (e.g., <a href="http://www.grants.gov">www.grants.gov</a> , <a href="http://www.sam.gov">www.sam.gov</a> ) <b>(5 points)</b>	5
c.	Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds	Their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner while ensuring costs are eligible and allowable. <b>(3 points)</b>	3
5.	<b>Past Performance</b> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project based on their past performance with respect to the agreements listed by the applicant in the Workplan as required under Section IV.B.		<b>6</b>

Criteria	Category	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points 100
a.	List of Federally funded and/or Non-federally funded Assistance Agreements and Reporting History	<p>Applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.B. (3 points)</li> <li>• History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.B 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. (3 points)</li> </ul> <p>NOTE - The focus of this criterion is on the applicant's past performance, not that of any partners, subrecipients, contractors, etc. who may be assisting the applicant with performance of the project and operation of the EJ TCTAC. In evaluating applicants under these factors, 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. <b>If you do not have any relevant or available past performance related to federal or non-federal grants, you should state this explicitly in your application (e.g., our organization has no relevant past grants experience.)</b> Including this statement will ensure you receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). Failure to include this statement may result in your receiving a score of receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p>	6

**B. Review and Selection Process**

Applications will be reviewed and scored under the following process:

**1. Threshold Eligibility Review Process** - All applications will be evaluated for eligibility using the threshold eligibility criteria described in Section III.C by EPA Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) and DOE staff.

**2. Review Panel and Evaluation Process** –EPA will convene a review panel(s) to review, score, and rank all eligible applications that pass the threshold eligibility review based on the merit evaluation criteria listed above. The review panel(s) will include EPA staff and may also include staff from other federal agencies. After the evaluation process, the review panel(s) will participate in a conference call with OEJ and DOE staff before final selection recommendations, rankings, and evaluation results are presented to the Selection Official, the Director of OEJ. The purpose of this call is to provide an opportunity for the review panel(s) to discuss their evaluation results and allow OEJ and DOE staff to ask any questions about the evaluations (e.g., to discuss any evaluation issues the review panels encountered, any evaluation scoring issues). Any changes that result to the evaluations or scoring as a result of the call will be documented and will only be based on the evaluation criterion above.

**3. Final Selection Process and Other Factors** – The review panel will present final rankings and selection recommendations to the Director of OEJ, who will then make the final selections for award. In addition to this information, the Director may also consider any of the following “other factors” in making final selection decisions from among the high-ranking applications:

- Geographic Diversity (e.g., to ensure the broadest coverage of the EJ TCTAC’s and to maximize nation-wide coverage).
- EPA and DOE Programmatic Priorities.
- Organizational diversity in terms of applicant type and size (e.g., endowment, organizational budget) in order to ensure a broad representation of applicants receiving awards to improve program effectiveness.
- Availability of funds.

In addition, because the objectives of this RFA are part of a government-wide effort to address environmental and energy justice concerns and challenges as illustrated by Executive Orders 13985 and 14008, information pertaining to proposed selection recommendations may be shared with other governmental departments or agencies before selections are made in order to determine whether potential selections: (1) are expected to be funded by another department or agency to minimize the possibility of duplicate funding, (2) could be affected by permitting, regulatory or other issues involving another department or agency, and/or (3) will complement or can be used to leverage funding by another department or agency to maximize value.

Accordingly, in making the final funding decisions, the Selection Official will consider the review panel rankings and recommendations, OEJ and DOE staff input based on their call with the review panel(s), and may also consider the other factors identified above including input from other government agencies and departments as described above. The “other factors” may only be considered by the Selection Official when determining final selections after the scoring and ranking process is complete.

### **C. Anticipated Announcements and Award Dates**

Below is a tentative schedule of important dates for the EJ TCTAC program and this RFA. Please note that the dates are tentative and subject to change.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
August 5, 2022	RFA issued and open competition period begins.
August 2022	Webinars and Pre-application Assistance Calls
October 4, 2022	Open competition closes. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov on or before 11:59 p.m. (ET) on October 4, 2022. Applications received after this date will not be reviewed.
October 2022	EPA will review applications for threshold eligibility purposes (Section III). Ineligible applicants will be notified via email with details regarding ineligibility. Notification to ineligible applicants will be sent via email to the contact identified on the submitted SF424 providing brief explanations on the reason(s) for ineligibility. Ineligible applicants may request a debriefing within 15 days of receipt of the correspondence (See debriefing and disputes clause in Section VI.l and m of the EPA Announcement Clauses referenced in Section I.G.)
October – December 2022	EPA review panel(s) review, score, and rank eligible applications. EPA will make the final selections for awards. All applicants will be notified of the selection results by mail and/or email.
December – January 2023	Headquarters/Regional offices will request any additional application documentation from selected applicants. Awards will be made by headquarters and/or regional grant offices as determined to be appropriate.
January – February 2023	OEJ will release a national announcement for awards.
February – March 2023	Post-award conference with awardees to coordinate EJ TCTAC coverage

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION** ([back to Contents by Section](#))

**Note:** Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Announcement Clauses](#).

### **A. Award Notices**

EPA anticipates notification of selected applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by the end of January 2023. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the applicant that its application 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 the appropriate EPA Award Official. 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 notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail.

The successful applicant may be requested to prepare and submit additional documents and forms 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.

## **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

This award is subject to the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Title 2 CFR, Parts 200 and 1500. EPA also has programmatic regulations located in 40 CFR Chapter 1 Subchapter B.

A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-policies-and-guidance-grants>.

## **C. Reporting and Plans**

### **1. Progress Report/Final Report Requirement.**

The applicant's project manager will be required to submit two semi-annual progress report for each 12-month reporting period throughout the duration of the agreement to update the EPA Project Officer on project progress. The project manager will also be required to have, at a minimum, semi-annual calls/meetings with the EPA Project Officer to discuss progress. Precise terms and conditions, including frequency of calls/meetings, will be negotiated by EPA and DOE staff as part of the award process. The project manager will also be required to submit a Final Technical Report for EPA approval within 120 days after the end of the 12-month project period. A Financial Status Report is also required and will be described in the award agreement. The EPA may collect, review, and disseminate those final reports that can serve as models for future projects. Many applicants may find it useful to document their progress using various media. This may include, but is not limited to the use of videos, blogs and other forms of social media.

### **2. Funding Reporting**

As noted herein, awards are expected to be funded by both EPA and DOE, and this funding includes appropriations received by each agency under the IJJA, annual appropriations, or both. Recipients must therefore have financial and programmatic management systems in place to separately track EPA and DOE funds, as well as IJJA and "regular" annual appropriation funds, using EPA and/or DOE provided accounting codes and procedures. Other reporting or

tracking requirements may apply. The award will include appropriate terms and conditions to this effect.

### **3. Justice40 Reporting**

The activities to be performed under the awards are expected to contribute to the President's goal that 40% of the overall project benefits flow to disadvantaged communities (the Justice40 Initiative - See Section I.A). Recipients, therefore, will be expected to report on certain metrics to demonstrate to what extent the activities contribute to the 40% goal. The award will include appropriate terms and conditions to this effect.

### **4. Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP)**

Quality assurance is sometimes applicable to assistance projects (see [2 CFR 1500.12](#)). Quality assurance requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources, such as databases or literature. Once the award is made, if a Quality Assurance Project Plan is required for the project, the applicant will have to draft a QAPP prior to beginning work on the project. You must reserve time and financial resources in the beginning of your project in order to prepare your QAPP and include the cost for developing your QAPP in your Detailed Budget. Selected applicants cannot begin data collection until EPA approves the QAPP.

### **D. Combining Applications Into One Award**

If an applicant submits multiple applications under this competition, and is selected for multiple awards, EPA may award a single assistance agreement that combines the separate applications.

### **E. Post-award meetings and EJ TCTAC Coordination**

Once awards have been made, EPA and DOE intend to meet with all the recipients to confirm the coverage of each EJ TCTAC and ensure they collaborate with each other (and any other EPA or DOE technical assistance providers as appropriate) to maximize the value of the program to attain its broadest impact, and to avoid duplication of coverage and effort. In addition, EPA and DOE intend to host regular post-award meetings with recipients to provide a forum for them to exchange ideas and best practices to strengthen the technical assistance program with a special emphasis on underserved communities and communities in rural and remote areas. Recipients can use these forums to identify technical assistance areas that would benefit from harmonization and coordination, explore joint workshops and similar informational sessions, and share expertise and experiences. EPA project officers (and DOE staff) will participate in these discussions as appropriate. Appropriate terms and conditions, as well as EPA and DOE



substantial involvement, relating to EJ TCTAC coordination and coverage will be included in the awards.

**F. Conflicts of Interest**

The awards will include terms and conditions requiring that the recipient ensure that Eligible Services provided under the award are performed in a manner that prevents conflicts of interest from tainting procurements financed with public or private funding. For example, if a consultant hired by an EJ TCTAC provides technical assistance on preparing an application for federal funding then the consultant may not participate in the development of procurement specifications or other activities that violate the provisions in 2 CFR 200.319 on full and open competition for federally funded contracts. Consultants may not receive sole source contracts based on their role in preparing the application for federal funding. Award terms and conditions will also include restrictions that prevent consultants from marketing their services or those of affiliated firms to applicants or recipients of federal grants while providing EPA funded technical assistance.

**VII. AGENCY CONTACTS** [\(back to Contents by Section\)](#)

<b>Main Contacts</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<i>Office of Environmental Justice</i>		
Jacob Burney, OEJ Grants Program Manager	<a href="mailto:Burney.Jacob@epa.gov">Burney.Jacob@epa.gov</a>	202-564-2907

**VIII. OTHER INFORMATION AND APPENDICES** [\(back to Contents by Section\)](#)

A – Optional EJ TCTAC Itemized Budget Sheet Template

## APPENDIX A

### Optional EJ TCTAC Itemized Budget Sheet Template

Note—EPA provides detailed guidance on how to characterize costs for budgeting purposes as well as a budget detail example in the agency's [Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#). For a sample Itemized Budget Sheet refer to: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/rain-2019-g02>

Year 1 of 3	Description	Total
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other		
Indirect Charges		

		Total Year 1 Budgeted Costs = \$2,000,000

Year 2 of 3	Description	Total
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other		

Indirect Charges		
		Total Year 2 Budgeted Costs = \$2,000,000

Year 3 of 3	Description	Total
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other		

Indirect Charges		
		Total Year 3 Budgeted Costs = \$2,000,000

Overall Combined Budget (All Years)	Description	Total
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Other		

Indirect Charges		
		Total Budgeted Costs (All Years) = \$6,000,000