Competition

The basics on competing for EPA assistance programs

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Finding EPA Competitive Opportunities

- Grants.gov: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)
  - Find current competitive opportunities
  - Synopses includes important info: funding amounts, eligible entities, submission deadline, and more
  - Searchable by CFDA, keyword, agency, type of entity, etc
  - Apply online
Competitive Opportunities

- EPA Program Office Websites
  - Check program websites for current funding opportunities (ex: Office of Air and Radiation: http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html)

- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): www.cfda.gov
  - Read more about assistance programs
    - Typical funding amounts, types of projects funded, eligible entities, and more
Preparing Proposals

- Each funding opportunity announcement has unique instructions and requirements
- Read the announcement for:
  - Eligibility information, deadlines, proposal content, review criteria, and more
- EPA’s Competition Policy
  [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/policy.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/policy.htm)
  - Familiarize yourself with EPA’s policy on competition
Types of Announcements

- Request for Proposals (RFP)
  - Abbreviated application: workplan and a few forms

- Request for Initial Proposals (RFIP)
  - 2 Phases: (1) EPA receives initial proposals (2) EPA requests full proposals from highest ranking applicants

- Request for Application (RFA)
  - Submission includes all forms and certifications necessary for award
Announcement
Contents/Highlights

- OMB Format
  http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/062303policy_directive.pdf

- Section I
  - Describes types of projects
  - What proposal has to address
Announcement

Content/Highlights

- **Section II**
  - expected number of awards
  - expected funding amount

- **Section III**
  - list of eligible entities
  - Cost share/matching requirements if any
  - Threshold eligibility criteria:
    may include legal, policy, relevance, programmatic, administrative, and/or financial criteria that have the effect of making an applicant, proposal/application, or project eligible or ineligible for award
Announcement Highlights

- Section IV
  - Content and form of application
    - Address Section I (program info), Section III (threshold criteria) and Section V (evaluation criteria)
  - Submission method (typically hard-copy or electronically thru grants.gov)
  - Submission dates and times
Announcement Highlights

- **Section V**
  - Ranking criteria
    - Criteria used to evaluate proposals
    - Must address ranking criteria in proposals
    - Other factors (in some announcements)
  - Review and selection process
Announcement Highlights

- Section VI
  - Award notices
  - Administrative and national policy requirements
  - Reporting
  - Dispute resolution process

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm
Announcement Highlights

- Section VII
  - Agency Contacts
- Section VIII
  - Other information
EPA occasionally modifies announcements
- Due dates, clarification of requirements, etc

Automatic Notification
- Sign up on grants.gov for automatic notification of modifications to specific announcements
- Modifications posted on grants.gov
Communications with Applicants

- See Section 11 of the Competition Policy
  [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/policy.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/policy.htm)

- Limitations on what can be discussed and when

- Pre-proposal Assistance
  - Many programs will post Q&As on a website
  - Some programs offer conference calls/webinars where applicants can ask questions
  - This type of information is usually in Section IV or VII of announcements, if applicable
Communications with Applicants

- EPA can:
  - Answer applicant eligibility questions
  - Clarify info on administrative aspects of proposal submission
  - Respond to requests for clarification of the announcement
  - NOTE: Clarifications that result in changes to the announcement must be communicated (via modification to the announcement) to all potential applicants

- EPA cannot:
  - Offer to write proposals for applicants
  - Review or comment on draft proposals
  - Provide information on the Agency’s approach to evaluating proposals beyond what is described in Section V of the announcement
  - Provide a competitive advantage to any applicant
Competitive Process

1. EPA prepares announcement
2. EPA posts announcement on program office website and grants.gov
3. EPA receives applications/proposals from applicants
   • Hard copy and electronically
4. EPA evaluates proposals and makes selections
5. Issues awards