

Solicited Guidelines
Frequently Asked Questions
June 2005

1. Since there is no 'statement of qualifications' anymore, is there any place for additional information on personnel participating in the project outside of the key contact attachment?

Reply: The Statement of Qualifications section has been supplanted by the Key Contacts section, consisting of the Key Contacts form (Attachment 4) and a CV or abbreviated resume for the PI, co-PI(s) and other key project personnel. Information about ongoing work for the PI and co-PI is also requested in Attachment 5. This is now the only information that is required regarding research team qualifications.

2. On Attachment 3, Financial Grant Management Capabilities Form, Item 21, it requests that we attached a schedule showing the total Federal dollars awarded to our organization by program/project identifying Federal Agencies and PTEs for the two most recent completed fiscal years. I'd like to know if this includes those AwwaRF projects that have been co-funded by EPA. If this is the case, should we include only the EPA fund?

Reply: The requested schedule should indicate the total award amount (AwwaRF plus Federal dollars, not including in-kind contributions) for any AwwaRF project that is partially Federal funded. This applies to AwwaRF projects co-funded by EPA as well as other Federal agencies (e.g. Arsenic Water Technology Partnership projects funded through the Department of Energy).

3. Are respondents to RFPs that are EPA funded required to comply with MBE/WBE requirements listed in the EPA cooperative agreement?

Reply: Attachment A of EPA's cooperative agreement sets forth MBE/WBE requirements for both AwwaRF and our subrecipients (i.e., researchers) on EPA-funded projects. The intent of these requirements is to ensure that AwwaRF and our subrecipients practice full and open competition within our procurement activity. Simply stated, your organization's procurement policies and procedures must allow qualified MBEs and WBEs to compete when acquiring goods and services. If your organization implements its procurement as indicated above, you have satisfied the intent of the EPA requirements.

4. Does the Financial Grant Management Capabilities Form only need to be completed by the Principal Investigator? Should the co-PI (being from a different company) fill out the form as well?

Reply: Only the PI (i.e., the subrecipient) needs to complete this form.

5. Pg 14, H. Indirect Costs - How detailed should the "detailed breakdown" be for the calculation of indirect costs? Is explanatory text of calculations OK, or are specific calculations based on real numbers desired?

Reply: Applicants have three options for substantiating indirect costs: 1) provide a copy of your federally approved indirect cost rate (multiplier) from your cognizant Federal agency; 2) provide a copy of your rate as reviewed by an independent certified public accountant (CPA); or 3) provide a detailed justification of how you have calculated your indirect cost rate for the proposal. A detailed breakdown of indirect costs is necessary only if your indirect cost rate has not been approved by the Federal government or reviewed by an independent CPA.

Please see page 9 of our guidelines for information on federal cost principles with which you need to comply based on your organization's classification. The cost principles contain several different methods of calculating indirect costs; you will need to use one of these approved methods.

6. Pg 21, H. Indirect Costs - What types of cost categories should be included in the budget indirect costs? Would these be from previous direct costs on the form? Should they be listed based on anticipations of the proposed project or on total overhead? Should there be indirect costs associated with cost categories other than labor (i.e., travel - I assume not, but...)? It seems as though this could lead to inflated prices. Does the Base \$ come from the direct cost reported elsewhere?

Reply: Unfortunately, we can't offer much in the way of guidance, because the cost categories will be specific to your business. Please see page 9 of our guidelines for information on federal administrative requirements with which you need to comply based on your organization's classification. This will include both administrative requirements and cost principles.

7. Pg 17-21, Costs in general - Given that some in-kind will come from third-party contributions, specific costs may be shared three ways - by AwwaRF, the contractor (cost-share), and third-party. Therefore, it is not required that the contractor cost-share percentage always be 25% for each cost category. Would it draw scrutiny if the AwwaRF share and cost-share (contractor) don't add up to 100% for items (with the remaining contributed by third parties)? Is there a preferred reporting method?

Reply: All third party in-kind (which is non-cash by definition) is entered into its own separate category (category J on the budget form) regardless of which task or activity it supports. Therefore the AwwaRF share and the cost-share columns for a particular category should always add up to 100 percent of the category total. The totals of all cost-share in categories A-I, and all third party in-kind in category J, are added to determine the research team's total contribution. It is this combined total that must equal or exceed 25 percent of the total project value. There is no requirement for cost-sharing on any particular line item or category; only the sum total of cost-share and third party in-kind are considered.

8. Are all of the items requested with the proposal distributed to the PAC for review?

Reply: No. The Financial Grant Management Capabilities form, Certifications and Assurances forms, and detailed basis for indirect rates (where necessary) will not be reviewed by the PAC. The guidelines request that these be submitted as stand-alone items with the proposal package.

9. We want to confirm that the QAPP requirements referenced in your RFPs, EPA/240/B-01/003, March 2001, is correct, because upon going to EPA's website we found another set of guidelines that seemed more appropriate. The project for which we plan to propose will not be generating any new data. This other QAPP guidance addresses this type of project, whereas the ones cited in the RFP do not.

Reply: The distinction is between requirements (which are binding and must be followed) and guidelines (which are non-binding). Our RFP references the EPA QAPP requirements document. There are various QAPP guidance documents, also available on the EPA web site, which apply to different types of projects. Researchers are welcome to use this guidance, at their judgment and discretion, depending on the nature of the project.

The RFPs released in March 2005 unfortunately use the term "QAPP guidance" in referring to the QAPP requirements. This will be corrected in future RFPs. Future RFPs will also alert researchers to the existence of EPA QAPP guidelines.