

TABLE 2.—ESTIMATED ANNUAL GOVERNMENT BURDEN

Form/request	Number re- viewed by State	Number re- viewed by Federal	Review time (hours)	State bur- den hours	State cost (\$)	Federal bur- den hours	Federal cost (\$)
Standard Form A	661	141	0.5	331	\$10,530	70.5	\$2,233
Short Form A	3,040	443	0.5	1,520	48,427	221.5	7,017
Section 308 Requests (Municipalities)							
Major Municipalities:							
Routine	503	107	1.0	503	16,026	107.0	3,390
Medium	88	19	10.0	880	28,037	190.0	6,019
Complex	45	9	20.0	900	28,674	180.0	5,702
Minor Municipalities:							
Routine	453	66	1.0	453	14,443	66.0	2,091
Interim Sewage Sludge Permit:							
Municipalities	2,971	652	3.0	8,913	283,968	1,956.0	61,966
Privately Owned Treatment Works	22	5	2.0	44	1,402	10.0	317
Form 1:							
New Facilities	4,547	620	0.5	2,274	72,434	310.0	9,821
Existing Facilities	8,979	1,224	0.5	4,490	143,035	612.0	19,388
Form 2b	792	198	0.5	396	12,617	99.0	3,136
Form 2c	5,836	796	2.0	11,672	371,870	1,592.0	50,435
Form 2d:							
Major New Facilities		40	0.5	0		20.0	634
Minor New Facilities		322	0.5	0		161.0	5,100
Section 308 Requests (Non-municipal)							
Majors:							
Routine	192	27	1.0	192	6,117	27.0	855
Medium	22	5	10.0	220	7,009	50.0	1,584
Minors:							
Routine							
Form 2e:							
New Facilities	121	17	0.5	61	1,928	8.5	269
Existing Facilities	3,143	428	0.5	1,572	50,068	214.0	6,780
Form 2f	53	13	2.2	117	3,715	28.6	906
Alaskan Lands MS4s	0	3	0.6	0		1.8	57
Large	3	1	60.0	180	5,735	60.0	1,901
Medium	5	2	40.0	200	6,372	80.0	2,534
Notice of Intent (NOI) NOI for Storm Water (SW) General:							
Permit—MSGP	0	5,288	0.5	0	0	2,644.0	83,762
NOI for SW discharges to MS4s	7,050	2,163	0.3	2,115	67,384	649.0	
NOI for general permits other than SW	3,458	759	0.3	865	27,543	189.8	6,011
Petition for Individual Permit	20	4	8.0	160	5,098	32.0	1,014
Permit Consolidation	81	19	0.5	41	1,290	9.5	301
Notice of Construction	0	3	0.6	0		1.8	57
Ocean Discharge	24	6	88.0	2,112	67,288	528.0	16,727
Totals				38,092.10	1,206,758	6,825.95	216,246.10

Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

Dated: April 16, 1998.

Michael B. Cook,

Director, Office of Wastewater Management.

[FR Doc. 98-10858 Filed 4-22-98; 8:45 am]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-6002-1]

Request for Proposals for Small Public Water Systems Technology Assistance Centers

AGENCY: Environmental Protection
Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency is soliciting proposals from institutions of higher learning interested in establishing a Small Public Water Systems Technology Assistance Center (SPWSTAC). Section 1420(f) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) as amended authorizes the Agency to make grants to institutions of higher learning to establish and operate such centers. The responsibilities of the centers will include the conduct of training and technical assistance relating to the information, performance, and technical needs of small public water systems or public water systems that serve Indian Tribes. The Environmental Protection Agency's fiscal year 1998 appropriation provides \$2 million for establishment of five SPWSTAC's. This document

explains what information an interested institution of higher learning must submit as part of its proposal to be considered for funding. The document also explains the criteria that the Agency will use to evaluate proposals and award funding.

DATES: Proposals must be received by June 8, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send proposals to Peter E. Shanaghan, Small Systems Coordinator, Mail Code 4606, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M Street S.W., Washington, DC 20460.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter E. Shanaghan, 202-260-5813 or shanaghan.peter@epamail.epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments focus attention on enhancing the technical, financial, and managerial capacity of public water systems to consistently comply with national primary drinking water regulations. Section 1420 of the Act as amended requires states to develop and implement a program to ensure that new systems demonstrate adequate capacity prior to start-up and to develop and implement a strategy to assist existing systems in acquiring and maintaining capacity. The Act provides for a variety of assistance for states and public water systems, especially small systems, in meeting capacity development objectives.

Section 1420(f) of the SDWA as amended authorizes EPA to make grants to institutions of higher learning to establish and operate small public water system technology assistance centers. The responsibilities of these centers would include the conduct of training and technical assistance relating to the information, performance, and technical needs of small public water systems or public water systems that serve Indian Tribes.

Section 1420(f)(4) directs EPA to select recipients of grants on the basis of the following criteria:

(A) The small public water system technology assistance center shall be located in a state that is representative of the needs of the region in which the state is located for addressing the drinking water needs of small and rural public water systems.

(B) The grant recipient shall be located in a region that has experienced problems, or may reasonably be foreseen to experience problems, with small and rural public water systems.

(C) The grant recipient shall have access to expertise in small public water system technology management.

(D) The grant recipient shall have the capability to disseminate the results of

small public water system technology and training programs.

(E) The projects that the grant recipient proposes to carry out under the grant are necessary and appropriate.

(F) The grant recipient has regional support beyond the host institution.

Additionally, section 1420(f)(5) requires that at least two of the grants be made to consortia of states with low population densities.

As part of its fiscal year 1998 appropriation, Congress provided EPA with \$2 million to fund five SPWSTAC's. The Agency recognizes that, based on the merits of the proposals received, equal funding of all five centers may not be appropriate, but we expect no single assistance offer to exceed about \$500,000.

Ongoing Related Initiatives

EPA is concerned about the potential for wasteful duplication of effort between these new SPWSTAC's and the extensive existing network of initiatives designed to assist small public water systems. To avoid such potentially wasteful duplication of effort, EPA urges applicants to carefully review the following summary of ongoing related initiatives. The Agency encourages applicants to propose projects, which would be complementary to and not duplicative of these existing initiatives.

Environmental Technology Verification (ETV) Program

The Small Drinking Water System Package Plant Pilot project under the ETV program is being managed by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF). The objective of this pilot project is to establish a self-supporting program for the performance verification testing of package drinking water treatment equipment. This pilot project includes development of detailed protocols for the performance verification testing of various types of package plant technologies; procedures to qualify field testing organizations to conduct testing using the protocols; and actual performance verification testing of package plant technologies.

Rural Community Assistance Program, Inc. (RCAP)

RCAP, a network of six regional organizations with multi-state service areas, provides technical assistance and community-specific training to rural areas with populations of 10,000 or fewer to help them access safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water supplies. In this program, most of RCAP's activities are carried out in rural areas with population of 2,000 or less, and in minority communities, under-served

rural areas or rural areas with a high percentage of low-income individuals. They provide free services to meet the water supply needs of community leaders, system owners, system operators, and local residents. RCAP also works with rural residents currently not served by a drinking water system or those whose drinking water system is inadequate or in need of capital improvements to identify options and find financing to solve these problems.

National Rural Water Association (NRWA)

NRWA, comprised of 45 state rural water associations conducts a rural and small drinking water system training and on-site assistance program that provides direct training and on-site problem solving assistance to rural and small water system personnel in the 48 contiguous states. Regulatory training, water system operations training, water system maintenance training, conservation training, and public health training is provided through seminars and formal training courses. NRWA's on-site problem solving includes non-compliance problems, complex operating and maintenance problems, operator certification problems, and source protection problems. Each state rural water association performs at least 300 scheduled hours of assistance/training per year under the program.

The National Drinking Water Clearinghouse (NDWCH)

West Virginia University operates the NDWCH. The clearinghouse offers a wide array of information services for small public water systems. They operate a toll-free information and assistance hotline, publish technical assistance oriented newsletters, and provide access to publications.

Existing University Centers

Congress has earmarked funding for specific university small water system centers, in addition to the \$2 million earmarked for the five SPWSTAC's. Montana State University (MSU) has operated a small water system assistance center since 1995. MSU has focused on documenting technology performance and developing innovative Internet based distance learning tools. Western Kentucky University and the University of Missouri at Columbia are establishing centers, which will commence operation in mid to late 1998. Both of these institutions are developing detailed work plans at this time.

EPA will encourage the three existing centers and the five centers for which

proposals are being solicited to cooperate to the maximum extent feasible. The Agency expects that each center will use its unique regional emphasis to address problems of national importance, as manifested in specific regional conditions.

Content of Proposals

Proposals should be succinct and directly to the point. In general they should not exceed 20 pages in length. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be required to complete the *Application for Federal Assistance* (SF 424).

Proposals must address each of the following questions:

(1) How is the state in which the proposed center is located representative of the drinking water needs of small and rural communities or Indian Tribes in the surrounding region?

(2) Within this region, what problems have been experienced or are foreseen to be experienced with small and rural public water systems?

(3) To what experience in small public water system technology management does the applicant have access?

(4) What capability does the applicant have to disseminate the results of small public water system technology and training programs?

(5) For each proposed project:

(i) What is the objective of the work?

(ii) What specifically does the applicant propose to do?

(iii) Why does the applicant believe this project is necessary and how would it contribute to enhancing the technical capacity of small public water systems?

(iv) Does the applicant have documented support for *this project* beyond their own institution (from, for example, state drinking water programs, technical assistance providers, local government, small systems, etc.)?

(v) What are the proposed deliverables?

(vi) What is the proposed schedule and major milestones?

(vii) Approximately how much of your total requested grant amount would you devote to this project? What other resources (from any source), if any do you propose to devote to this project?

(viii) How will this project complement, and not duplicate, ongoing related initiatives described earlier?

(6) What regional support (from, for example, other institutions of higher learning and/or neighboring state drinking water programs) does the applicant have for the proposed center?

(7) What is the total amount of assistance sought by the applicant?

What is the total amount of funding, in addition to the requested assistance that the applicant plans to devote to the proposed center?

(8) If the applicant wishes to be considered as representing a consortia of states with low population density, then the applicant must provide a detailed justification specifically identifying the states which are members of the consortia, the population density of each state, and the specific working agreement among consortia members.

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals

A panel of EPA staff and state drinking water program administrators will evaluate proposals for overall technical merit based upon the selection criteria contained in section 1420(f)(4). To implement the requirements of section 1420(f)(5), the Agency will assign extra credit to otherwise good quality proposals from applicants representing consortia of states.

The following criteria will be used to assess the answers to each of the questions posed under the previous section on Content of Proposals. Each of these questions will be given equal weight, and together they will account for a total of 30% of the applicants raw score.

(A1) Specificity of answer. Specific answers, which directly respond to the question, will be rated higher than vague or general answers.

(B1) Detail of answer. Detailed but concise answers will be rated higher than vague or general answers.

(C1) Factual basis of answer. Answers for which supporting objective data or other facts are provided will be rated higher than answers relying on generalizations or unsubstantiated statements.

In addition to being evaluated on the quality of the responses to individual questions, each proposal will be evaluated in its entirety based upon the criteria contained in section 1420(f)(4). For purposes of this solicitation, the criteria contained in section 1420(f)(4) are being designated as (A2), (B2), (C2), (D2), (E2), and (F2). Criteria (A2), (B2), (C2), (D2), and (F2) will each be weighted by a factor of 1, criterion (E2) will be weighted by a factor of 2. Collectively these criteria will account for 70% of an applicants raw score. The criteria are:

(A2) Representativeness of host state. Proposals from states that are most representative of the drinking water needs of small and rural communities or Indian Tribes in the surrounding region

will be rated higher than proposals from less representative states.

(B2) Nature of problems experienced by water systems. Proposals from regions where the problems experienced or foreseen to be experienced by small and rural public water systems are more serious or fundamental will be rated higher than proposals from regions where the problems are less serious.

(C2) Experience. Proposals from institutions having access to greater experience in small water system technology management will be rated higher than those from institutions having access to less experience.

(D2) Dissemination capability. Proposals documenting greater capability to disseminate the results of small public water system technology and training programs will be rated higher than proposals documenting less capability.

(E2) Necessity and appropriateness of proposed projects. Higher ratings will be given to proposals whose projects clearly address well-documented needs, do not duplicate ongoing initiatives, enjoy broad support beyond the host institution, and most effectively leverage federal resources.

(F2) Regional support. Proposals, which have substantial clearly documented support beyond the host institution, will be rated more highly than those proposals having less documented support.

Finally, the Agency will consider one additional factor.

(A3) The Agency will assign extra-credit to otherwise good quality applicants who represent consortia of states with low population densities. Extra credit will take the form of a 25% increase in the applicants raw score, with the threshold rating for "good quality" to be recommended by the review panel after the consideration of the quantitative merits of all applications.

Timing of Awards

Grant awards will be made on or before September 30, 1998. EPA will move as expeditiously as possible to complete review of applications following June 8, 1998.

Dated: April 17, 1998.

Elizabeth Fellows,

Acting Director, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water.

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