

Marcia Seidner, US EPA Region 2, 290 Broadway, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10007-1866, (212) 637-3590, seidner.marcia@epa.gov, States & Territories: NY, NJ, PR, VI

Annette N. Hill, US EPA Region 4, OPM, 61 Forsyth Street, SW, Atlanta, GA 30303, (404) 562-8287, hill.annetten@epa.gov, States: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN

Karen Alvarez, US EPA Region 6, Fountain Place, Suite 1200, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, TX 75202-2733, (214) 665-7273, alvarez.karen@epa.gov, States: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX

Dick Sumpter, US EPA Region 7, 726 Minnesota Avenue, Kansas City, KS 66101, (913) 551-7661, sumpter.richard@epa.gov, States: KS, MO, NE, IA

Debbie Schechter, US EPA Region 9, 75 Hawthorne Street (CMD-7), Francisco, CA 94105, (415) 744-1624, schechter.debbie@epa.gov, States & Territories: CA, NV, AZ, HI, AS, GU

David Schaller, US EPA Region 8, 999 18th Street, Suite 500, Denver, CO 80202-2466, (303) 312-6164, schaller.david@epa.gov, States: CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY

Anne Dalrymple, US EPA Region 10, 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101, (206) 553-0199, dalrymple.anne@epa.gov, States: AK, ID, OR, WA

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose

EPA intends these competitive grants to be catalysts that challenge communities to invest in a more sustainable future, recognizing that sustainable environmental quality, economic prosperity, and community well-being are inextricably linked. The Sustainable Development Challenge Grant program is an important opportunity for EPA to award competitive grants that leverage private and other public sector investment in communities (ranging in size from neighborhoods to cities to larger geographic areas such as watersheds or metropolitan areas) to build partnerships that will increase the capacity of communities to ensure long-term environmental protection through the application of sustainable development strategies.

Overview of the Sustainable Development Challenge Grant Approach

The grant program encourages communities to recognize and build upon the fundamental connection between environmental protection, economic prosperity and community well-being. Accomplishing this linkage

requires integrating environmental protection in policy and decision-making at all levels of government and throughout the economy. The SDCG program recognizes the significant role that communities have and should play in environmental protection. The program acknowledges that sustainable development is often best designed and implemented at a community level and encourages projects that can be replicated in other communities. This program also requires grantees to implement a stakeholder process to identify measurable milestones to assess progress toward integrating environmental and economic goals and community well-being.

Achieving sustainability is a responsibility shared by environmental, community and economic interests at all levels of government and the private sector. This emphasis on strong community involvement requires a commitment to ensuring that all residents of a community, of varying economic and social groups, have opportunities to participate in decision-making and benefit from successful sustainable development activities. Only through the combined efforts and collaboration of governments, private organizations and individuals can our communities, regions, states, and nations achieve the benefits of sustainable development. In keeping with this philosophy, the EPA will implement this program consistent with the principles of Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations" (February 11, 1994). Projects funded must ensure that no person(s) is subjected to unjust or disproportionate environmental impacts. We encourage submissions from Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.

Linkages to Other Initiatives

The EPA initiated the SDCG program as a pilot effort in 1996 and funded ten of the 600 proposals for a total of \$500,000. In 1997, the Agency received 962 proposals requesting \$38,000,000 in assistance and selected 45 of the proposals for funding at a total of approximately \$5,000,000. Project descriptions are available via the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/ecocommunity>.

EPA and its state and local partners continue to refine how environmental protection is accomplished in the United States. The Agency recognizes that environmental progress will not be achieved solely by regulation. Innovative attitudes of regulatory

agencies combined with individual, institutional, and corporate responsibility, commitment and stewardship will be needed to assure adequate protection of the earth's resources. The Sustainable Development Challenge Grant program is consistent with other community-based efforts EPA has introduced, such as the Brownfields Initiative, Environmental Justice Small Grants Program, Project XL, the President's American Heritage Rivers Initiative, Watershed Protection Approach, Transportation Partners, the Smart Growth Network, the Community-Based Environmental Protection Approach, and the Sustainable Urban Environment effort. The Sustainable Development Challenge Grant program is also a step in implementing "Agenda 21, the Global Plan of Action on Sustainable Development," signed by the United States at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. All of these programs require broad community participation to identify and address environmental issues.

Through the Sustainable Development Challenge Grant program, EPA also intends to further the vision and goals of the President's Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD), created in 1993 by President Clinton. EPA is coordinating existing urban environmental programs within the Agency and with other federal, state and local agencies. The President charged the Council, composed of corporate, government, and non-profit representatives, to find ways to "bring people together to meet the needs of the present without jeopardizing the future." The Council has declared this vision:

"Our vision is of a life-sustaining Earth. We are committed to the achievement of a dignified, peaceful and equitable existence. We believe a sustainable United States will have a growing economy that equitably provides opportunities for satisfying livelihoods and a safe, healthy, high quality of life for current and future generations. Our nation will protect its environment, its natural resource base, and the functions and viability of natural systems on which all life depends." (February 1996)

The Sustainable Development Challenge Grant program furthers this vision by encouraging community initiatives that achieve environmental quality with economic prosperity through public and private involvement and investment.

Examples of Potential Projects

EPA welcomes proposals for many types of projects, as demonstrated in the projects funded in the previous two years. The following are examples of the types of projects EPA could consider for