PROJECT SUMMARY

QAPPs document how state and tribal recipients of U.S. EPA grants will properly collect, analyze, and use environmental data.

Through business process improvements, states, tribes, and EPA are working to streamline QAPP development and provide transparency and consistency in the review and approval process.

CONTACTS

Katherine Chalfant
U.S. EPA Office of Enterprise Information Programs
chalfant.katherine@epa.gov
(202) 564-1511

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROJECT PLAN (QAPP) PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Improving timeliness, transparency and consistency in the QAPP process.

Challenge

EPA provides grant funding to states and tribes to collect, analyze, and use environmental information under many environmental statutes (e.g. Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act). Grantees must develop and receive EPA approval of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) prior to beginning work. QAPPs are technical documents developed by the grantee and reviewed and approved by EPA. They ensure activities are performed correctly and document data quality procedures and key personnel. Processes for reviewing and approving grantee QAPPs differ across EPA's ten regional offices; however, what remains the same is that no work can begin until the grantee receives approval of their QAPP.

Benefits

Through the E-Enterprise model, EPA, states, and tribes are using shared governance to improve the QAPP process and procedures and optimize technology support. These partners are working together to make the process more:

- Consistent
- Timely
- Transparent

Accomplishments

Improved Communications: Developed and communicated broadly across EPA Regions a set of criteria and guidelines to improve direct communications between Regional Quality Assurance managers and grantees. Developed a list of reference documents needed to conduct scoping meetings.

What's Next?

Throughout fiscal year 2020, small workgroups consisting of EPA, state, and tribal representatives are continuing work to:

1. **Standardize Grant Terms and Conditions:** Inventory current national level and programmatic terms and conditions and work to develop standardized QA requirements across programs and Regions.

2. **Assess and Provide QAPP Training:** Inventory existing training, survey state and tribal training needs, and conduct a gap analysis to change future training delivery and scope. Improve available resources and develop additional training where needed.

3. **Collect Data and Metrics:** Collect data and track workflows to better understand the timing and need for rework in the QAPP review-approval process. Track the percent of tribal and state QAPPs that the EPA reviews and approves within 60 calendar days.

4. **Address Consistency in the QAPP Process:** Identify where consistencies exist and leverage these as best practices.