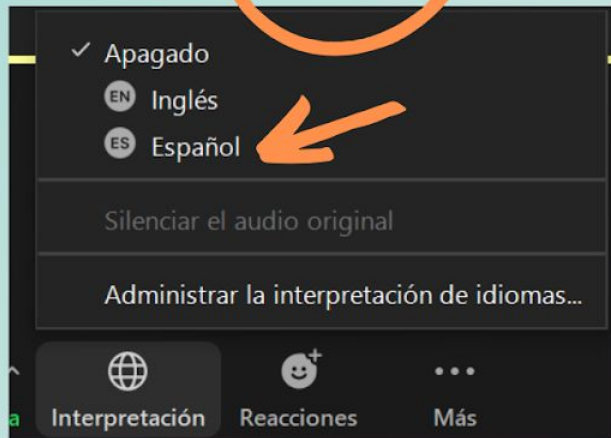
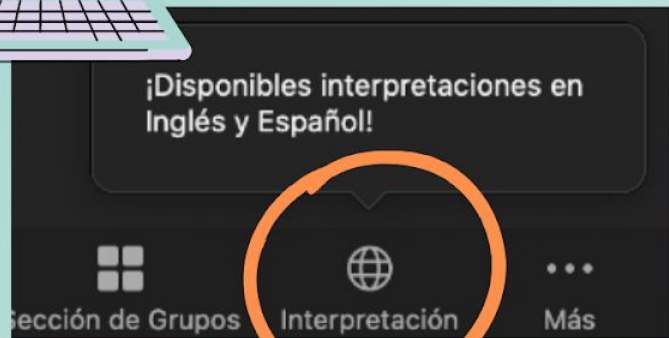


# QUALITY ASSURANCE WEBINAR

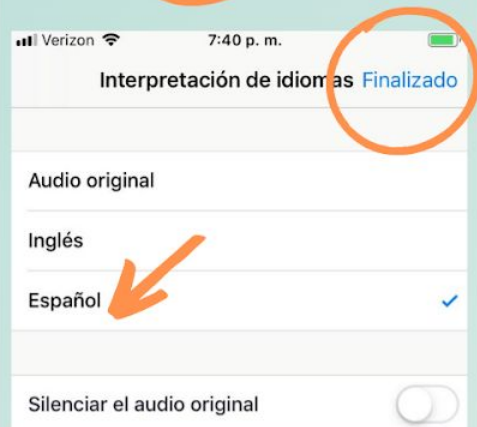
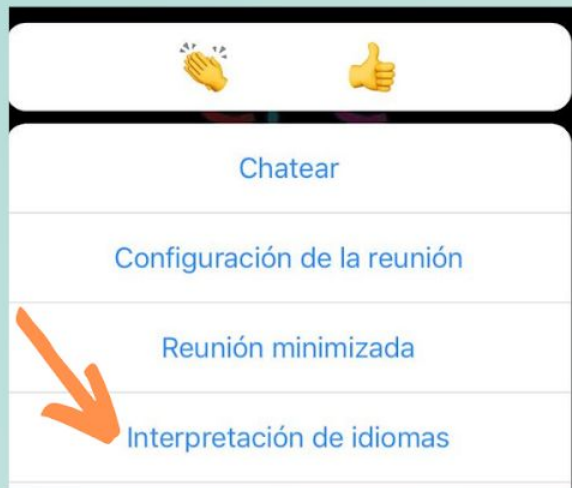
# PARA ACCEDER A LA INTERPRETACIÓN



Por computador



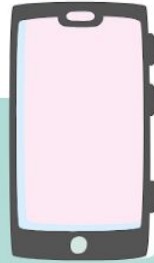
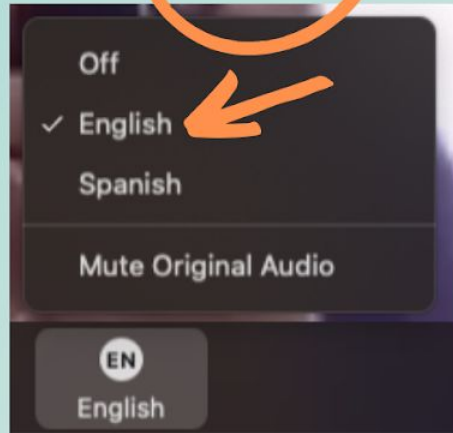
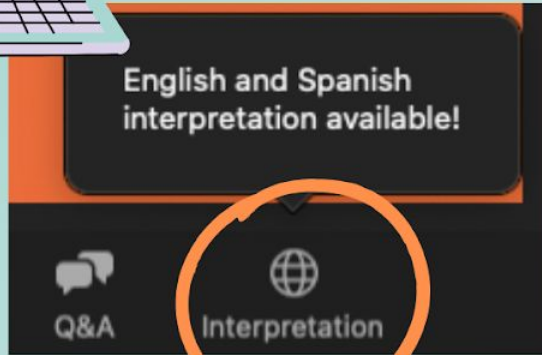
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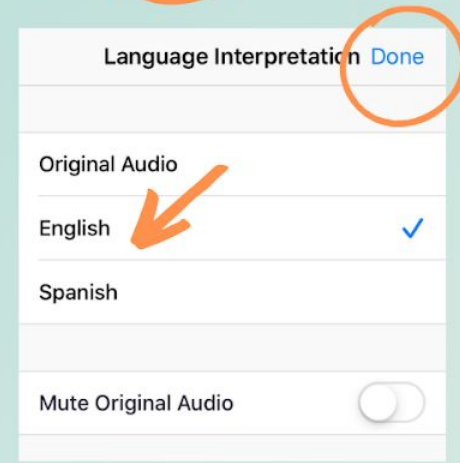
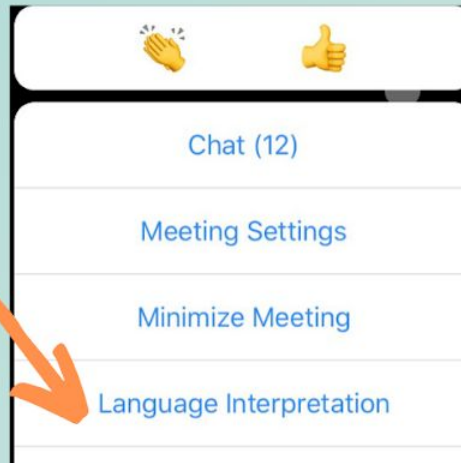
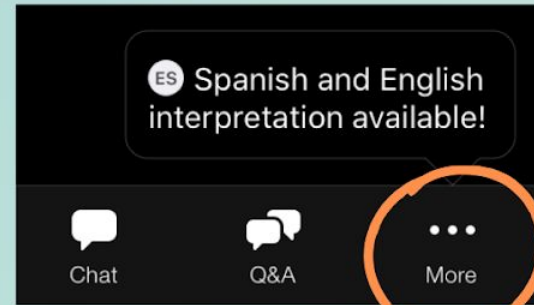
# TO ACCESS INTERPRETATION



Via computer

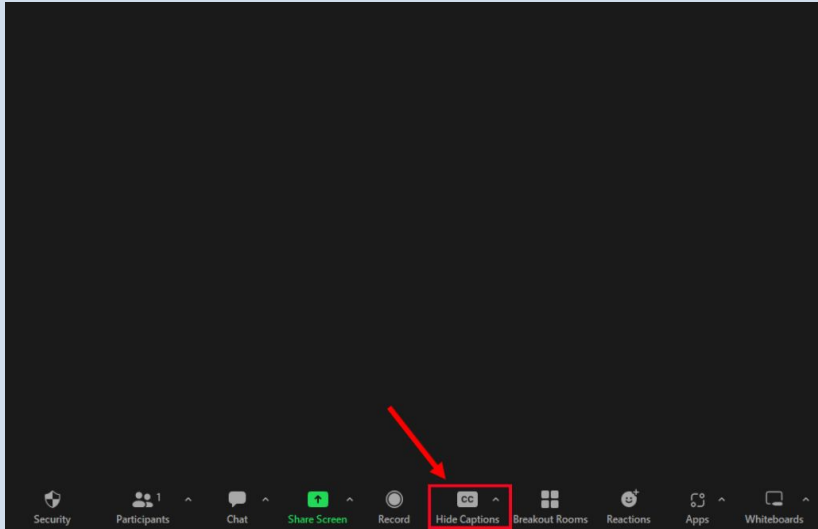


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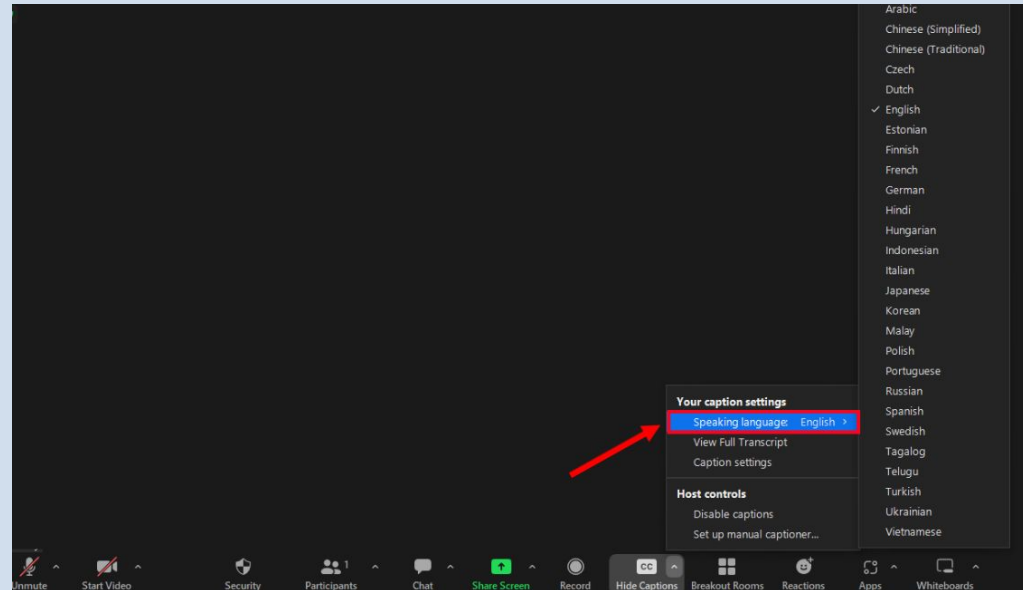


# Enabling Closed Captions

Once you have pressed the Closed Caption button, you will see a menu of options. Please choose your preferred language settings.



In order to enable captions, find the Closed Caption button at the bottom of your screen and press it.



August 30, 2024

- Welcome + Settling In
- Introduce UNITE - EJ
- Purpose + Outcomes
- Speaker #1 - Environmental Protection Agency
- Speaker #2 - Community Group Leader
- Q&A (45 minutes)
- Close

# Agenda

# What we will cover today

- 01 Activities that trigger Quality Assurance requirements
- 02 What is required to get EPA approval
- 03 Lessons from a community group

What we will NOT cover today (but is covered on other webinars):

- How to apply to the Thriving Community Grantmaker program
- What types of projects are eligible for funding

# Introducing UNITE - EJ

The goals of UNITE-EJ are to address environmental and public health issues and to cultivate healthy, thriving communities by building capacity within EJ communities and organizations.



1) resource grassroots organizations to address past, current, and future environmental health and human health challenges;

2) coordinate efficient, effective, and equitable grantmaking and reporting processes across EPA's regions 8, 9, 10 and at the national level, reducing grassroots organizations' barriers to accessing federal resources.

Sign up for the UNITE - EJ newsletter at  
[www.climatejusticealliance.org/unite-ej/](http://www.climatejusticealliance.org/unite-ej/)

# National Coordinator / Grantmaker - WESTERN US



REGION 8:  
Serving  
Colorado,  
Montana, North  
Dakota, South  
Dakota, Utah,  
Wyoming and 28  
Tribal Nations

REGION 9:  
Serving Arizona,  
California,  
Hawaii, Nevada,  
the Pacific  
Islands, and 148  
Tribal Nations

REGION 10:  
Serving Alaska,  
Idaho, Oregon,  
Washington, and  
271 Tribal  
Nations

**\$50M over 3 years for:**

- 1) Supporting regional grantmakers across EPA regions 8, 9, 10
- 2) Regranting directly to communities



**EJ TCGM**  
Environmental Justice  
Thriving Communities  
Grantmaking Program  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



# Who is my regional grantmaker?

## Region 8

- JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.  
Mountains & Plains  
Environmental Justice  
Grants Hub <https://mapejgrants.org/>



## Region 9

- Social and Environmental  
Entrepreneurs (SEE)  
<https://saveourplanet.org/thriving-communities/>



SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENTREPRENEURS

## Region 10

- Philanthropy Northwest  
<https://philanthropynw.org/epa-environmental-justice-thriving-communities-grantmaking-program>



# Why Quality Assurance Matters for Community Goals

- Multiple ways of knowing
- Making community data count
- Growing technical capacity to build organizational capacity
- Strengthening communities by meeting them where they are today



# A project in any type of funding can trigger Quality Assurance steps

Type 1: Assessment Grant	Type 2: Planning Grant	Type 3: Development Grant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research (that is incidental to the project design)</li> <li>• Sampling</li> <li>• Testing</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> <li>• Investigations</li> <li>• Surveys and Studies</li> <li>• Public Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Partnership-building</li> <li>• Public outreach and education</li> <li>• Coordination with community stakeholders to address environmental issues</li> <li>• Training activities for community organizations and community members</li> <li>• Projects and activities to spur community involvement (e.g., cleanups of vacant lots)</li> <li>• Smaller land purchases and acquisitions that require less than half of the total amount of subgrant funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Development</li> <li>• Blueprints for construction or cleanup projects, schematics, and technical development</li> <li>• Work to get permits in place directly related to an environmental project</li> <li>• Smaller land purchases and acquisitions that require less than half of the total amount of subgrant funding</li> <li>• Implementation of project plans</li> <li>• Public outreach and education</li> </ul>

Highlighted activities may trigger the need to create a Quality Assurance Project Plan

# Introducing Our Speakers



**Audrey Johnson**



Quality Assurance  
Manager, EPA Region 9

**Juan Rosas**



Network Manager,  
Hispanic Access Foundation

# **WHAT IS A QAPP? WHY DO WE NEED ONE?**

AUDREY L JOHNSON  
US EPA, REGION 9

## AGENDA

- What is a QAPP?
- Why does EPA require QAPPs?
- How do QAPPs benefit us?
- When is a QAPP required?
- What is the Graded Approach?
- Who do I contact if I have questions?



- ▶ A QAPP (kwapp, kwopp, q-a project plan, q-a-p-p) provides guidance defining:
  - ▶ WHAT do researchers want to know (what question is being asked)
  - ▶ HOW data will be collected
  - ▶ HOW data will be analyzed
  - ▶ HOW data will be determined “of sufficient quality” (i.e. “good enough”) to answer the original question
  - ▶ WHO is responsible for each task
  - ▶ WHAT IF things don’t go according to plan?

## WHAT IS A QUALITY ASSURANCE PROJECT PLAN (QAPP)?



## WHAT IS A QUALITY ASSURANCE PROJECT PLAN (QAPP)?

- ▶ It is a formal planning document which describes how environmental information operations are:
  - ▶ planned,
  - ▶ implemented,
  - ▶ documented, and
  - ▶ assessed during the life cycle of a project.
- ▶ It describes in detail what must be implemented to ensure the results of the environmental information operations performed are of sufficient quantity and quality to support the intended use.



### EPA's Quality Program

- supports EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.
- the program ensures environmental information operations products and services are of known and documented quality for their intended use(s).

### All EPA organizations & non-EPA organizations

- collecting, producing, and/or using environmental informations operations on behalf of EPA are required to participate in the EPA Agency-wide Quality Program

### Extramural Agreements

- All work performed involving environmental information operations shall be implemented in accordance with an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)

# WHY DOES US EPA REQUIRE QAPPS?

# HOW DO QAPPS BENEFIT US?

*“The process of developing the QAPP is vital to the success of the project & often just as important as the final written QAPP document.*

*The QAPP gives structure to the development of a project & helps when writing the conclusions reached at the end of the project.”*

*-Handbook for Citizen Science, Quality Assurance and Documentation, US EPA*

# HOW DO QAPPS BENEFIT US?

- A QAPP aims to ensure the credibility of information collected, produced, or used.
  - Scientific Data Integrity
  - Reliable & Defensible Decisions
  - Transparent & Effective Management of Internal & External Activities
  - Reduced &/or Justifiable Resource Expenditures
- A QAPP is especially important if you want others to consider using your organization's information to implement change.

# WHEN IS A QAPP REQUIRED?

A QAPP is required by the EPA when **environmental information operations** are conducted by & for EPA.

**Environmental information operations is a**  
“collective term for work performed to collect, produce, evaluate, or use environmental information & the design, construction, operation or application of environmental technology”

# WHEN IS A QAPP REQUIRED CONT'D

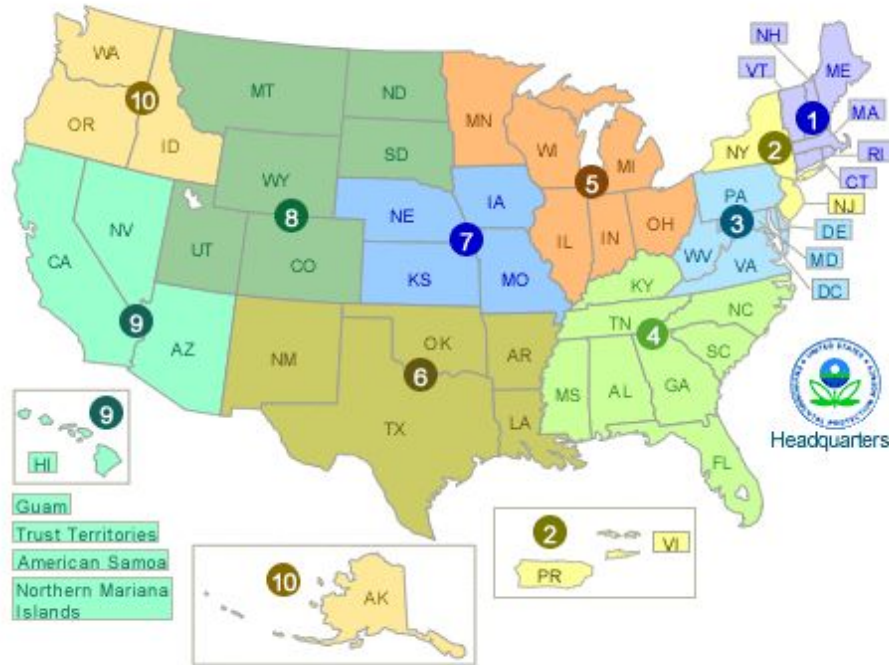
Examples of **environmental information operations** include, but are not limited to:

- direct measurements of environmental parameters or processes.
- analytical testing results of environmental conditions (e.g., geophysical or hydrological conditions).
- information on physical parameters or processes collected using environmental technologies.
- calculations or analyses of environmental information.
- information provided by models.
- information compiled or obtained from databases, software applications, decision support tools, websites, existing literature, & other sources.
- development of environmental software, tools, models, methods, applications; &
- design, construction, & operation or application of environmental technology.

# GRADED APPROACH

- Implementation of the Quality Policy & Procedure allows for the **graded approach** to be applied to the systematic planning, development, & approval of QAPPs.
  - It is the process of basing the level of details & comprehensiveness of quality documentation applied to environmental operations/programs according to the intended use of the results & the degree of confidence needed in the quality of results
  - The graded approach establishes the Quality Assurance & Quality Control requirements appropriate to:
    - the complexity & type of work,
    - how the results will be used,
    - the available resources, &
    - the unique needs of the organization or the customer (for contracts).
  - The Graded Approach is not a mechanism to waive requirements. If an element is not applicable, an explanation as to why it is not applicable shall be provided in the QAPP.

# REACH OUT TO YOUR REGIONAL QUALITY MANAGER!



- ▶ Each EPA Regional Office develops and implements its own individual system in support of the EPA Quality Program.
- ▶ It is SO IMPORTANT to work with your RQAM if you have questions, concerns or need clarification about a QA requirement.

# A Community Perspective



**Juan Rosas**



Network Manager,  
Hispanic Access Foundation



# Community Perspective & QAPP Process

## What Was It Like to Implement This Project?

- **Rewarding but Complex:** Combined technical monitoring with grassroots involvement.
- **Education and Awareness:** Helped Latino communities understand PM2.5 and its health impacts.
- **Community Engagement:** Real-time data collection empowered residents and built ownership; partnerships with local churches facilitated engagement.

## QAPP Writing Process and Timeline

- **Initial Challenges:** First QAPP draft was not approved; revised with EPA's provided template.
- **Essential Resources:** EPA's *Enhanced Air Sensor Guidebook* and template clarified standards.
- **Expert Support:** Dr. Chris Hennigan's expertise from the University of Maryland was invaluable.

# Community Perspective: Challenges

## Key Challenges

1. **Technical Issues:** Managing sensor connectivity, heat protection, and data quality.
2. **Community Engagement:** Keeping consistent engagement and adapting to site dropouts.
3. **Balancing Standards:** Aligning community impact with EPA's rigorous standards.

# Successes & Lessons Learned

## Successes

1. **Empowered Communities:** Real-time data fostered health advocacy and local ownership.
2. **Strong Partnerships:** Collaboration with churches and Hispanic Access Foundation expanded outreach.
3. **Trust with EPA:** Positive, flexible guidance built a foundation for future projects.

## Lessons Learned

- **Accessibility Matters:** Simplifying data for all audiences, with Dr. Hennigan's help, was key.
- **Flexibility is Essential:** Adjust to unexpected issues—technical and logistical.
- **Trust the Process:** Avoid rushing; EPA approval ensures data reliability and value.

# Tips for Working with the EPA

1. **Use EPA Resources:** *Enhanced Air Sensor Guidebook* and templates are invaluable for guidance.
  - Links: [EPA Guidebook](#), [QA Tools](#)
2. **Maintain Open Communication:** Frequent updates with EPA contacts build transparency.
3. **Frame Feedback as Collaboration:** Treat feedback as a partnership for better outcomes.

# Seeding Success Webinar Series

## PANEL Q&A

# Other Experts on the Line



**Mary Goldade**



Quality Assurance Manager,  
EPA Region 8

**Cindy Fields**



Quality Assurance Manager,  
EPA Region 10

# Closing & Next Steps

- Recording and slides from this webinar will be posted on our website
- Follow up email will include slides, QAPP examples, FAQ's document and screening tool
- Sign up for our newsletter to stay in touch

Questions? Email

[Iris@climatejusticealliance.org](mailto:Iris@climatejusticealliance.org)



**Thank you!**





# How can I screen my project to see if it requires a QAPP?



OMB Control Number = xxx-xxxx, Expiration Date = xx/xx/xxxx  
This collection of information is approved by OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq. OMB Control Number: 2035-NEW. Responses to this collection of information are voluntary. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to be 30 to 15 minutes. Send comments on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden to Director, Information Engagement Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2821T), 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20460. Include the OMB control number in any correspondence. Do not send the completed form to this address.

## Quality Assurance Preliminary Screening Questions

This screening tool is for entities applying to the Thriving Communities Subgrants program. To help determine if their project may involve environmental information operations or human subject research. Environmental information includes data and information that describe environmental processes or conditions which support EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment. Examples are listed in the [Quality Assurance Project Plan Standard](#).

These responses will not be used for scoring or to determine eligibility of the applicants. If applicants are

selected for an award, the completed form must be submitted to the Grantmakers for their use in determining next steps for regional quality assurance needs.

Check "yes" or "no" for each of the items provided below as it applies to your specific project. If you select "yes" for any of the below statements, a QAPP is required. It is anticipated that most applications will involve environmental information operations. If this form does not identify the need for a QAPP, the Grantmaker will share the completed form, along with the workplan, with the EPA Regional Quality Assurance Manager (RQAM), who will determine, in consultation with the Regional Project Officer, whether a QAPP is needed for the project.

If a QAPP is required, the subgrantee is responsible for developing the QAPP. The QAPP must meet the minimum requirements in the QAPP Standard, as applicable to the project, in addition to any regional requirements. Final review and approval of the QAPP must be made by the EPA Project Officer and RQAM. Review and approval may also be requested by the submitting organization. **An approved QAPP must be in place prior to the work being performed.** Grantmakers are available to assist the development of subgrantee QAPPs by helping navigate regional QA resources, answer questions, provide training materials and coordinate QAPP approval.

**If unable to reach your Grantmaker for Quality Assurance related questions, please contact the**

# Grantee Support from UNITE - EJ

- Quality Assurance experts on contract
- Regular Office Hours with an EJ Scientist
- One on One Coaching
- Low touch and high touch support
- QAPP review before submission to EPA



# EJ Thriving Communities Ecosystem

## The Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmakers

- Refers potential applicants to TCTAC for technical assistance
- Provide information for dissemination
- Exchange /share information and updates-- **how to request info, provide detail on program awards and opportunities, share guidance on applications**

TCGM

## TCTAC

- Support potential applicants to prepare for EJ TCGM submissions
- Overlap with other projects/rewards
- Exchange /share information and updates-- **Upcoming TA sessions, Process to request TA, Detail on types of TA, Share awareness around upcoming opportunities, share state based focus areas, share community feedback on TCGM**

Thriving Communities Technical  
Assistance Centers Program

# Who is my Technical Assistance Center?

## Region 8

- Mountains and Plains Thriving Communities Collaborative

## Region 9

- Center for Community Energy and Environmental Justice - San Diego State University
- WEST EJ Center - University of Arizona

To find your  
TCTAC, visit:  
[www.ejtctac.org](http://www.ejtctac.org)

## Region 10

- Center for Environmental Health Equity - University of Washington
- Northwest Environmental Justice Center - Willamette Partnership

# When will my QAPP need to be ready?

Grantmaker	Application Open	Decisions Made	QAPP written and submitted	QAPP feedback from EPA
UEJ - National West	January 2025	March 2025	May 2025	July 2025
JSI - Region 8	October 2024	January 2025	May 2025	July 2025
SEE - Region 9	January 2025	March 2025	May 2025	July 2025
PNW - Region 10	October 2024	March 2025	May 2025	July 2025

