

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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Executive Summary

Federal Agency Name

Fisheries Habitat Conservation Program Office (HCPO)

Funding Opportunity Title

FY25 Ruth D. Gates Coral Reef Conservation Grants - Fishery Management Council
Cooperative Agreements

Announcement Type

Competitive

Funding Opportunity Number

NOAA-NMFS-OHC-2025-29484

Assistance Listing Number(s)

11.441

Dates

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service or received by
www.Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, February 25, 2025.

Funding Opportunity Description

Funding Opportunity Description: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program provides financial assistance through the Ruth D. Gates Coral Reef Conservation Grants - Fishery Management Council Cooperative Agreements (FMCCA) to the Regional Fishery Management Councils for projects to conserve and manage coral reef fisheries, as authorized under the Coral Reef Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 6410. Projects funded through the FMCCA are for activities that: 1) Improve compliance with coral reef fisheries laws and essential fish habitat designations; 2) Provide better scientific information to improve the management of shallow coral reef fisheries and associated essential fish habitat; 3) Advance ecosystem-based fisheries management through the application of existing data and fisheries management tools. Proposals selected for funding through this solicitation will be implemented through a one-year cooperative agreement. The role of NOAA in the FMCCA is to help identify potential projects to improve sustainable management of shallow coral reef fisheries and ecosystems, strengthen the development and implementation of the projects, and assist in coordination of these efforts with federal, state, territory or commonwealth management authorities and various coral reef user groups. Approximately \$1,000,000 is expected to be available for FMCCA in FY 2025. The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program anticipates that awards will range from \$125,000-\$300,000. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal request over \$350,000.

Please see the National Marine Fisheries website on the [Grant Application Process](#). You will need to pay close attention to the submission checks section and the common error section. There are common errors that prevent a successful application submission and receipt in eRA Commons. Grants.gov may allow you to submit an application, but eRA Commons will not accept the application if it includes these errors, and therefore NOAA will not receive it. When you submit an application to this competition you will receive notification of submission validation from Grants.gov and eRA Commons. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA to review. To ensure successful submission of an application, we strongly recommend that you submit a final and complete application at least two business days prior to the submission deadline.

In addition to the Grants.gov automated notification messages, once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an automated notification from eRA Commons that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned. If there are errors in the application, eRA Commons will send an automated email notification(s) of any errors or warnings identified by eRA Commons. You must resolve all eRA Commons errors prior to the application due date in order for the application to be processed.

You should save and print the proof of submission messages from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons. If you do not receive an acceptance message from both Grants.gov and eRA Commons, you should follow up with the eRA Helpdesk at 1-866-504-9552 and the agency contact listed in Section VII to confirm NOAA's receipt of the complete submission. See Section IV(G) for detailed instructions on submission validation requirements.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Coral reefs are among the most complex and diverse ecosystems on earth. They support important fishing and tourism industries, protect coasts from wave and storm damage, build tropical islands, contain an array of potential pharmaceuticals, and provide essential services like food security, livelihood, and culture, among other benefits. As shallow-water, near shore communities, coral reef ecosystems are ecologically linked to adjacent watersheds and are highly vulnerable to human activity. Stresses in the coral reef environment include poor water quality from runoff and inadequate sewage treatment, sedimentation, destructive fishing practices, recreational overuse and misuse, and impacts from climate change, including changes in ocean chemistry.

To better address these and other threats, the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP), working federal, state, and territorial partners, has drafted a National Coral Reef Resilience Strategy that is based on sound science, innovative management approaches, effective enforcement, meaningful partnerships, and inclusive public participation. This draft plan outlines efforts in five conservation goals that are designed to support healthy, resilient United States (U.S.) coral reef ecosystems capable of providing valuable services to current and future generations. The goals of this draft plan are to improve water quality; restore or preserve resilient, genetically diverse, reproductively viable coral populations; maintain stable or increasing fisheries taxa to maintain sustainable fisheries and ecosystem services; and enhance coral reef ecosystem services that support resilience and well-being for coastal communities.

This grant competition directly contributes to the 'improved fisheries sustainability' focus area and falls under the Ruth D. Gates Coral Reef Conservation Grants. The improvement fisheries sustainability area is about managing fisheries in a manner that allows maintains healthy populations and habitats and preserves the ecosystem services upon which communities depend. It also recognizes the need for new information to inform adaptive management approaches that direct and adjust management actions. There are two strategies under this area that are focused on building capacity for coral reef fisheries management and providing data essential for coral reef fisheries management.

B. Program Priorities

The primary focus of this funding announcement is to support activities that improve fisheries sustainability within the shallow (<30 m [<90 ft] depth) and associated mesophotic (30–150 m [90–500 ft] depth) coral reef ecosystems found within the U.S. waters. All applications must be consistent with the draft National Coral Reef Resilience Strategy.

Where there are overlapping fishery management priorities with the U.S. coral jurisdictions (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), the councils are strongly encouraged to work collaboratively with the fishery management agencies within these jurisdictions to meet common fishery management objectives, to support improved management coral reef fisheries in jurisdictional waters, and/or to improve communication and data sharing. The councils should obtain letters from jurisdictional partners or other partners, who intend to collaborate on any proposed task, as a way to verify their commitment and willingness to participate in the proposed task/project.

Projects should address coral reef fishery management objectives within the following categories:

1. Outreach and communication to improve compliance with fishery regulations related to federally managed coral reef fishery stocks (management unit species) and/or essential fish habitat.
2. Address science/information gaps that help advance sustainable management of coral reef fishery stocks. This may include activities such as:
 - a) Obtaining life history and ecological data related to key fishery taxa that are ecologically important for coral reef conditions and particularly vulnerable to overfishing.
 - b) Conducting cooperative research with fishers, communities, or other stakeholders to obtain information on coral reef fishery species abundance, habitat utilization, or habitat-gear interactions.
 - c) Filling priority data gaps to improve coral reef fishery stock assessments.
3. Advance ecosystem-based fisheries management through the application of existing data and fisheries management tools. This can include activities such as modeling effects of coral cover (habitat) changes on coral reef fishery production and development of decision-support tools (e.g., risk and vulnerability assessments, ecosystem and well-being indicators, and management strategy evaluation.)

The councils may request staff salary, fringe, and travel costs not exceeding \$125,000 to work exclusively on coral reef conservation activities. Travel supported through this cooperative agreement must be related to the implementation of activities described in the project narrative. Expenditures on large equipment, real property, capital expenditures, and/or infrastructure are not a priority for funding under this program.

C. Program Authority

The Coral Reef Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 6410.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 6410, and pending appropriations in fiscal year 2025, the CRCP expects to provide up to \$1,000,000 in funding for this competition. The CRCP anticipates that typical awards will range from about \$125,000 to \$300,000; NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal request over \$350,000.

Councils may request that NOAA collaboration on their projects allow for directed internal funding within NOAA to support council designated coral reef fisheries research and monitoring conducted by the NMFS Science Centers or other parts of NOAA. Applications selected for funding by NOAA will be awarded as new cooperative agreements through the NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation. The amount of funding for each award will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for each project, the merit and ranking of the proposals and individual tasks/projects, and the amount of funds made available to the CRCP by Congress.

Federal funds have not yet been appropriated for this program, and there is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should use an anticipated start date of October 1, 2025. The period of performance for projects in this program should be 12 months.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as described in 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.1, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the award. Substantial involvement on the part of NOAA may include, but not limited to collaboration scope of work; providing assistance on technical aspects of the project; technical monitoring of award activities beyond ordinary stewardship (e.g., tracking the progress of activities through site visits and progress report evaluation); assistance with permitting; coordination with other state, territorial, or federal activities; involvement in public meetings and workshops; developing protocols to evaluate the success of specific activities; and review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.325. As the federal government will be substantially involved in the project for cooperative agreements, applicants may suggest anticipated federal roles and responsibilities in their proposals.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are limited to the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications. NOAA CRCP staff are available to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives, ongoing coral reef conservation programs/activities, and regional funding priorities. For proposals that involve collaboration with current NOAA projects or staff, NOAA employees may provide a limited statement verifying the nature and extent of the collaboration and confirming prior coordination activities. Letters of support from NOAA employees are not allowable and will not be included among the application materials considered by merit reviewers.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

NOAA CRCP financial assistance awards are subject to statutory and regulatory matching fund policies. Federal funds for any coral conservation project under 16 U.S.C. § 6410(b) may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the award. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this grant competition requires a 1:1 contribution of non-federal matching funds.

As per section 16 U.S.C. § 6410(b)(3) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act, the NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements: a) No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and b) The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement. The CRCP recognizes that the councils cannot meet the matching requirement of the 6403(b)(1) as the council's entire budget is federally funded. The CRCP will waive the matching requirement as per section 6403(b)(2).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Full applications submitted through Grants.gov must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications will not be considered for funding.

The following information describes ineligible project proposal types and activities:

- 1) Activities that alleviate the liability associated with legally required mitigation for the adverse environmental impacts of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state, or federal law are ineligible.
- 2) Activities that constitute compensatory restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state, or local law are ineligible.
- 3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute, or regulation are ineligible. Applicants planning to combine grant or matching funds with mitigation should review the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources; Final Rule at 73 Fed. Reg. 19594 (April 10, 2008). NOAA plans to follow the approach adopted by some other Federal agencies on Page 19,636 that describes scenarios where mitigation credits may or may not be obtained in association with federal financial incentives.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. Information about the recommended format for full applications is contained in Section IV.B.

B. Content and Form of Application

The application process for this competition requires submission of a complete application on or before the submission date and time listed above. All application materials should use a legible 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. For each application, the information provided in elements 1-5 (described below) may not exceed 45 pages total; the 45-page limit does not apply to required federal forms and other documentation (elements 6- 11 below). Applications that exceed the 45-page limit will be shortened by removing pages before it is forwarded to merit reviewers. Pages excised from lengthy applications will not be reviewed, and any activities described therein will not be eligible for funding consideration. Applications that are incomplete, unclear, or contain numerous typographical errors, may not be understood effectively by the reviewers, leading to lower evaluation scores; so, applicants are advised to review their application materials closely before they are submitted to the agency for consideration. Application submitted through www.Grants.gov should have no more than three attachments in addition to the federal forms: 1) Cover page and project narrative (elements 1-4 below), 2) Budget table and budget narrative (element 5), and 3) all additional information (elements 6-8) combined into one file. Applications submitted in electronic format should be either Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) or Microsoft Word files; however, PDF is the preferred format. The total electronic file size of the proposal narrative and appendices combined shall not exceed 100 megabytes in storage space. Files that are larger than five megabytes may not be properly downloaded, uploaded, or received by the agency or the reviewers. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed. Each application should include the following information:

1. A one-page cover sheet that includes:
 - a. Short title of the proposed project and requested start date;
 - b. Applicant organization name, address, phone number;
 - c. Principal investigator responsible for conducting the project and their contact information;
 - d. Geographic locations of the project and the site names;
 - e. Amount of grant funds requested;
 - f. Requested award start date and end date; and
 - g. One or two paragraph project summary emphasizing the overall goal of application objectives and activities.
2. Project Description (Proposal Narrative): A separate write-up is needed for each individual project.
 - a. Title of individual project: The title should express what the task is going to do.
 - b. Introduction of proposed project: Provide a brief summary of relevant background information that justifies the need for the proposed project or task. Identify the problem/issue the project intends to address and describe its significance to the conservation of U.S. coral reef ecosystems. Identify the specific objective, listed under Section I.B. Program Priorities, to which the project's objective(s) corresponds. Objectives should be simple and understandable, as specific and quantitative as possible, and attainable within the proposed time frame, the described budget, and the human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment-oriented and identify obtainable goals, outcomes, and products

c. Project objectives: This section is the scientific or technical plan to be accomplished to meet the project objectives, and should be written with sufficient detail to allow a review of suitability of the proposed work and the likelihood of successful completion in the stated time frame. Please ensure your project narrative includes detailed descriptions of each activity, including the rationale for the activity, how it will be accomplished, specific milestones, and expected products. The narrative should include information on dissemination of the findings/results, outreach materials, and/or data to resource managers, local communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate. The project narrative also needs to include information on how the project will be evaluated for success. If the work is one component of a larger project (or the activity is a pilot project for a larger initiative), and proposed activities will continue after the end of the grant period, describe future activities and potential future funding sources (and other mechanisms) to continue the work. If the goal of the project is to build capacity for improved conservation, describe proposed plans to ensure the activities continue into the future and how success will be evaluated.

The applications in-water tasks should note the use or take of Endangered Species Act listed corals or fish; anticipated impacts to other Endangered Species Act listed species or critical habitat; any National Historic Preservation Act resources in the action area, as well as a commitment to quickly provide information needed by NOAA to analyze project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, see Section IV.B.5. Supporting Documents, below).

d. Timeline for the project: A description of specific activities and associated timelines necessary to meet them. Describe the timelines in increments (e.g., month 1, month 2, etc. or 1st quarter, 2nd quarter, etc.), rather than by specific dates.

e. Project Management/Personnel: Describe how the project will be organized and managed, and include the qualifications of the principal investigator(s) through a summary of professional backgrounds, which may be supplemented by short biographies, curricula vitae, or resumes in Element 6 below, Supporting Documents. The principal investigator may or may not be the applicant. However, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there should be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and principal investigator (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the principal investigator will be responsible for completing the work). Please also include information about the specific responsibilities of other personnel funded through the proposal, including the technical and administrative points of contact as appropriate.

f. Partner justification and roles: For projects that are done collaboratively or in support of the needs of the U.S. coral jurisdictions' fishery management agencies, the project narrative should indicate the key jurisdictional contacts and their roles in supporting the implementation of the proposed task. For activities where the council would like to have NOAA substantially involved, the narrative should include the NOAA contact and a description of NOAA's involvement.

3. Table of Products/Outputs and Outcomes for project:

Please provide a table to summarize the specific products/outputs and outcomes that will be produced for each task under the award. All products resulting from federally-funded awards should be provided to NOAA within 120 days of the end of the award period and should be of publishable quality. All products will need to comply with Section 508 standards (See Section VI.C., Reporting, below). NOAA may make award products available to the public, so recipients are encouraged to omit sensitive information (i.e., budget or salary information) from products submitted to NOAA. All products should explicitly acknowledge the support of NOAA's CRCP. For each entry, please provide a description of the product, the type or format of the product (e.g., journal publication, white paper, public service announcement, presentation, newsletter, metadata record, annual monitoring summary), and the expected date(s) when the product will be submitted to NOAA. NOAA will use this information to ensure that products are submitted to the agency in a timely manner and made available to the public whenever possible.

4. Budget table and narrative for the project

Reviewers will evaluate project costs by reviewing your budget justification. The budget justification narrative must include a detailed breakdown by category of applicable costs (i.e., object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the award, with a detailed narrative justification for both the federal and non-federal (if applicable) shares. The object classes should match those found in the SF-424A. If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a budget overview for the entire project to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and outcomes should be provided. If a task has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amount(s) requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal should be included. If the proposed task includes a monitoring component, the applicant should provide an estimate of all monitoring-related costs within the proposed budget.

The NOAA Habitat Conservation and Grants Management Division staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. The narrative budget justification should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the SF-424A budget form. An SF-424A for each year of requested funding will be required prior to an award offer, but not as part of the initial application. Please follow this additional budget development guidance.

Applicants should include detailed budget information regarding all known cost-based contracts and sub awards, and indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates for contracts in the narrative. Applicants should describe activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. Each sub award should include form SF-424A. Detailed budget information includes:

- a. Name of identified qualified sub recipient or contractor, affiliation, contact information, and method of selection. For "to be determined," describe plans for selection.
- b. Period of Performance. Include the dates for the performance period. If it involves a number of tasks, include the performance period for each task.
- c. Scope of Work. List and describe the specific activities or tasks to be performed.
- d. Criteria for Measuring Accountability: Include an itemized line item breakdown as well as total contract/award amount. If applicable, include any indirect costs paid under the cost-based contract/award and the indirect cost rate used.
- e. Itemized Budget. Include categories used in program budget for sub-recipients or cost-based contractors. If applicable, include any direct cost paid under the subaward or contract and the indirect cost rate used.

All sub awards and contracts must be made consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.331-200.333 for sub awards, and 200.317-200.327 for procurements.

For any equipment, a description of the item and associated costs or price is required, including a description of how it will be used in the project. Note that equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000; see 2 CFR 200.1. Non-federal applicants should identify, if this information is known when submitting the grant application, who they plan to request that NOAA transfer equipment or property ownership titles to after the project ends. The decision on grant ownership requests will be made by the Grants Officer during the grant closeout process.

The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel charges.

The CRCP will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, or profit. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Applicants will not be reimbursed for direct costs of time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award, regardless of whether or not an award is received. Such expenditures will not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching funds.

5. Supporting documents:

This section includes the qualifications of the primary project personnel; letters of support received from the relevant jurisdictional representatives, partners, or communities involved in the project; permits; and additional environmental compliance information.

The applicant may provide short biographies or resumes of key personnel. The applicant should provide evidence of support for the project by the fishery management agencies within U.S. coral jurisdictions or a letter acknowledging the utility of the work from a National Marine Sanctuary in which the project will be conducted. Letters of collaboration from partners and any letters of support should be included in the application to confirm their participation. Additional letters of support are not required, but are encouraged.

A list or copy of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the proposed work. For work within National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Seashores, and other federally-designated protected areas, it is the responsibility of the applicant to request and obtain any necessary permits or letters of agreement from the appropriate government agencies prior to commencement of an award. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize potential adverse impact on the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits should be included in the proposal package.

Failure to apply for and/or obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analyses where necessary (i.e., NEPA environmental impact assessment) will delay or prevent the award of funds for projects that have been preliminarily selected for funding.

Under NEPA, NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of projects or proposals seeking funding from NOAA. After the application is submitted, NOAA may require additional information to fulfill NEPA and other compliance requirements. The applicants selected for funding may be required to complete a subset of questions (based on activities outlined your application as identified by the Federal Program officer) of the [Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA](#). Federal Financial Assistance applicants accessible at Applicants may also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to work with NOAA on environmental compliance or refusal to implement any required action (e.g., the best management practices, conservation recommendations, or mitigation measures) related to consultations may be grounds for the denial of an application.

The CRCP has a [Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement](#) (PEIS) and a joint programmatic [Biological and Conference Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation on the National Coral Reef Conservation Program and Mission: Iconic Reefs](#) (BiCOP) that streamlines the environmental evaluation and compliance process. NOAA will need to ensure the proposed work aligns with actions and level of impacts described in these documents and applicants must implement all relevant 1) required best management practices (Appendix A of the PEIS); 2) reasonable and prudent measures and conservation recommendations from the BiCOP; and/or 3) any other required actions from other environmental consultations (e.g., National Historic Preservation Act). If a successful applicant chooses not to implement requirements in the CRCP programmatic documents, NOAA will need to complete independent environmental compliance actions, which may delay the funding or starting of the work.

In cases where additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website.

6. Data/Information Sharing Directive (2-page limit)

a. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

b. Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets (see Data management guidance for proposals writers, below). NOAA's Administrative Order on the Management of Environmental Data Management and Information is available under.

c. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

d. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

e. Data management guidance for proposal writers:

Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Liz Fairey, Federal Program Officer, NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation, Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov, 301-427-8632.

i. Data Accessibility: The NOAA CRCP requires that public access to grant/contract-produced data be enabled. Funding recipients are expected to submit data to NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, which will provide public access and permanent archiving. The NOAA Program has held preliminary consultation with NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information regarding these pending data.

ii. Technical Recommendations: The NOAA CRCP is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

iii. Resources: NOAA CRCP resources for data sharing or archiving have already been identified; proposals should not include such costs (unless data volume is expected to exceed 20GB).

7. Standard Form 424 (SF-424)

At the time of application submission, all applicants must submit a signed and dated copy of Standard Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," to indicate the total amount of Federal funds and non-Federal matching funds proposed for the project period. An electronic signature is applied automatically when an application is successfully submitted via www.grants.gov.

8. Standard Form 424A (SF-424A)

At time of application submission, all applicants are required to submit an SF-424A Budget Form. The first column of Sections A and B shows the Federal funds requested. In the second and third column in Section B, the funding for the two additional years can be added; the total three-year funding is shown in the final column of section B. Provide the forecasted cash needs for year one in Section D. In Section E add the second and third year funding request. Section F summarizes the direct charges in line 21 and lists the indirect charges requested; please show the rate used in line 22. Please note that completion of the SF-424A as described above represents NOAA's preference and may not be consistent with the instructions that accompany the SF424A. All budget figures should match the funding requested on the application cover sheet and correspond with the descriptions contained in the project and budget narratives. Each proposed sub-award of \$25,000 or more should be accompanied by a separate SF-424A form to fully document the proposed sub award budget.

9. Standard Form 424B

All applicants are required to submit a signed SF- 424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.

10. Standard Form CD-511

All applicants are required to submit a completed form CD-511, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters, Drug-Free Workplace Requirements, and Lobbying.

11. Other Federal Forms (if applicable)

Applicants may be required to disclose certain lobbying activities by filling out form SF-LLL, regarding any payment or agreement to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a covered federal action under 31 U.S.C. § 1352.

This announcement is not seeking proposals that generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the Proposal.

See Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application above for NEPA information.

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application; and (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time NOAA is ready to make a Federal award, NOAA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Full applications in electronic form must be received and validated through www.grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on February 25, 2025. See Section IV. G. for more information, including a limit on transit time and address to submit paper applications.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State's process under EO 12372, contact the official listed in Section VII of this announcement for referral information.

F. Funding Restrictions

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.1, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance). A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In addition, an eligible applicant under 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). An applicant may also describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through the Department of Commerce by contacting Jennifer Jackson Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East-West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or jennifer.jackson@noaa.gov. Applicants may elect to propose the reduction of part, or all, of allowable indirect costs as a component of cost sharing.

The following projects will not be eligible for funding: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or federal law; (2) Activities that constitute mitigation for natural resource damages under federal or state law; (3) Activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation; (4) Construction projects; and (5) Large equipment and/or infrastructure acquisitions; and (6) Real property acquisitions.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. These registrations include SAM.gov, Grants.gov, and eRA Commons. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems can take 4 to 6 weeks, so applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible. If an eligible applicant does not have access to the internet, please contact the Agency Contacts listed in Section VII for submission instructions.

Prior to registering with eRA Commons, applicant organizations must first obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov, if needed (refer to Section IV. Applications and Submission Information, Section C). Organizations can register with eRA Commons in tandem with completing their full SAM and Grants.gov registrations; however, all registrations must be in place by time of application submission. eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one Signing Official (SO) and at least one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application.

The first PD/PI listed on the application must include their eRA Commons ID in the "Credential, e.g. agency login" Applicant Identifier field on the SF424 form. Failure to register in the Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application.

H. Address for Submitting Proposals

Applicants should submit full applications electronically through www.Grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to create an online application workspace to submit the application. If an applicant has problems accessing the online workspace at Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

If you are not able to submit electronically, paper submission must have a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt for paper applications. Facsimile or electronic mail applications will not be accepted. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received later than ten business days following the closing date will not be accepted. Paper applications should be sent to: Elizabeth Fahey, ATTN: Fishery Management Council Coral Reef Cooperative Agreements Applications, NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, 1315 East West Highway, SSMC3, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

V. Application Review Information

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals	Maximum Points: 35
<p>This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.</p> <p>Use this scale: Poor =0, Fair =3.5, Good = 5.0, Commendable =7.5, and Excellent = 10.0 to determine how the application addressed the following questions.</p> <p>a) Will the proposed task/project contribute to improved understanding, conservation, management, or protection of shallow coral reef fisheries and/or habitat within the council's region?</p> <p>b) Does the proposed task/project support improved fisheries sustainability?</p> <p>c) For tasks/projects that are conducted in collaboration with local resource agencies, what is the need for the proposed task in the jurisdiction that it will be implemented; what is the likelihood that any outcomes, results, or products will contribute to coral reef fisheries conservation and management in that jurisdiction; and is the level of collaboration between the council and local, state, or territorial governments clearly described and are appropriate for the aims of the project? For tasks/projects that solely support council specific needs, what is the likelihood that the outcomes, results, or products will contribute to specific council coral reef fisheries conservation and management actions or enhance compliance with fishery regulations?</p> <p>d) Does the application demonstrate partner support for the work, such as the inclusion of letters from partners and relevant government agencies?</p>	
2. Technical/scientific merit	Maximum Points: 35
<p>This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.</p> <p>This section evaluates how clearly the Council identified performance evaluation methods and the suitability of those methods for evaluating the success or failure of the task/project in terms of meeting its original goals. Use this scale: Poor =0, Fair =7.0, Good =14.0, Commendable =28.0, and Excellent =35.0 to determine how the application addressed the following questions.</p> <p>a) Does the applicant demonstrate familiarity with previously developed studies or assessments and describe how this task/project builds upon or incorporates previous work?</p> <p>b) Are the task/project objectives in the proposal clearly defined, focused, and realistic; and can they be reached within the proposed project period?</p> <p>c) What is the task/project technical feasibility; is the proposed approach technically sound; are the methods appropriate; and are the proposed methods likely to achieve the task goals and objectives?</p> <p>d) Are there effective mechanisms to evaluate project success; are there well described milestones and a planned timeline?</p>	

3. Overall qualifications of applicants	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Use this scale: Poor =0, Fair =3.5, Good = 5.0, Commendable =7.5, and Excellent = 10.0 to determine how the application addressed the following questions.</p> <p>a) Does the applicant and associated task/project personnel (council staff and/or contractors) have the capacity/knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing the project?</p> <p>b) Are the facilities; administrative resources and capabilities; and equipment and other physical resources available to the applicant to support and successfully manage the work, including the availability of NOAA or other technical expertise to guide the project to a successful completion?</p>	
4. Project costs	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. Use this scale: Poor =0, Fair =3.5, Good = 5.0, Commendable =7.5, and Excellent = 10.0 to determine how the application addressed the following questions.</p> <p>a) Is the proposed budget cost-effective and realistic based on the applicant's stated objectives, time frame, and amount of overall task/project budget already secured from other sources?</p> <p>b) Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of costs by object class?</p> <p>.</p>	
5. Outreach and Education	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Use this scale: Poor =0, Fair =3.5, Good = 5.0, Commendable =7.5, and Excellent = 10.0 to determine how the application addressed the following questions.</p> <p>a) Is the level outreach appropriate for the proposed task/project including the dissemination of information, data, findings to the state or territory management agencies or appropriate user groups?</p> <p>b) Are the proposed products suitable for the task and if data are collected did the applicant provide a detailed data management plan?</p>	

Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will use the questions and scoring scales listed above to evaluate each application. If an application has multiple tasks/projects within it, those will be evaluated individually using the same criteria.

Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 4 steps, including: (1) an initial administrative review by the competition manager; (2) technical merit review; (3) internal Habitat Conservation and CRCP review and recommendation; (4) selection by the Selecting Official; and (5) obligation of funding by the Grants Officer.

1. Initial Administrative of the Applications: Application packages will be screened to ensure that they are timely, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that can easily be rectified or cured.

2. **Technical Merit Review:** Technical merit review is conducted by a minimum of three technical reviewers with expertise regarding the type of work or subject matter proposed in the application. Each reviewer will individually evaluate each project/task (0-100 points) using the evaluation criteria provided in Section V.A. above and the scores across projects will be averaged for an overall proposal score. This review may involve experts from both NOAA and non-NOAA organizations. The technical reviewers' ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals. No consensus advice will be given by the technical reviewers. NOAA may also request and consider written comments on proposed projects from each state, territorial, or federal agency with jurisdiction over coral reef ecosystems in the area where the project is to be conducted.

3. **Internal Habitat Conservation/CRCP review:** The Federal Program Officer, Habitat Conservation, and CRCP staff will evaluate comments and scores provided by the technical-merit review process, and conduct a further analysis to identify any major issues or shortcomings with the application. (e.g., additional information needed to conduct NEPA/environmental compliance analysis, overlap in ongoing work, and lack of key partners). The Federal Program Officer will summarize comments received on each proposal and identify modifications that may be needed prior to final selection.

4. **Selection:** The reviewer comments, composite project scores, rank order, and a summary of the concerns (if any) identified through the technical review process and internal review will be presented to the Selecting Official. The Selecting Official, in consultation with CRCP staff, will identify proposals to be recommended for funding, as described in Section V.C. below. The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, or ask applicants to work together. NOAA may defer applications to the future or reallocate funds to different funding categories to the extent authorized. The Selecting Official or designee may negotiate the funding level of the proposal.

5. **Grants Management Division Review.** The NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.206. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive Federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be timely addressed in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.208. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final.

Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institution
 - c. By type of partners

- d. By research priority
- e. By project types
- 3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/Federal agencies.
- 4. Program priorities and policy factors.
- 5. Applicant's prior award performance.
- 6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups.
- 7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA anticipates that the cooperative agreements will have a start date of October 1, 2025 dependent on funding availability, the completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, NEPA analysis, and documentation supporting any grant activities. Recipients should receive award notices one month before award start dates.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

PRE-AWARD COSTS. Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date at the applicant's own risk without approval from NOAA and in accordance with the applicant's internal policies and procedures. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award. This does not include direct proposal costs (as defined at 2 CFR 200.460). In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for direct proposal preparation costs. Pre-award costs will be a portion of, not in addition to, the approved total budget of the award. Pre-award costs expended more than 90 days prior to the period of performance start date require approval from the Grants Officer. This does not change the period of performance start date.

GRANTS OFFICER SIGNATURE. Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are not considered awards until the Grants Officer has signed the grant agreement. Only Grants Officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. The Grants Officer's digital signature constitutes an obligation of funds by the federal government and formal approval of the award.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of funds. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS. Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which applies to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC) TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in eRA at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

BUREAU TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept an award under this solicitation will be bound by bureau-specific standard terms and conditions. These terms and conditions will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system. For NOAA awards only, the Administrative Standard Award Conditions for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Financial Assistance Awards U.S. Department of Commerce are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/financial-assistance>

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS. The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

DATA SHARING PLAN.1. Environmental data and information collected or created under NOAA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the NOAA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. 2. Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. 3. NOAA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data. 4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

More information can be found on NOAA's Data Management Procedures at: https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/documents/Data_Sharing_Directive_v3.0_remediated.pdf and at NAO 212-15 Management of Environmental Data and Information: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-212-15-management-of-environmental-data-and-information>

NOAA SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY.

NOAA requires organizations receiving federal assistance to report findings of sexual harassment, or any other kind of harassment, regarding a Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, or any other key personnel in the award.

NOAA expects all financial assistance recipients to establish and maintain clear and unambiguous standards of behavior to ensure harassment free workplaces wherever NOAA grant or cooperative agreement work is conducted, including notification pathways for all personnel, including students, on the awards. This expectation includes activities at all on- and offsite facilities and during conferences and workshops. All such settings should have accessible and evident means for reporting violations and recipients should exercise due diligence with timely investigations of allegations and corrective actions.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial>.

SCIENCE INTEGRITY. 1. Maintaining Integrity. The non-Federal entity shall maintain the scientific integrity of research performed pursuant to this grant or financial assistance award including the prevention, detection, and remediation of any allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, and the conduct of inquiries, investigations, and adjudications of allegations of violations of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. All the requirements of this provision flow down to subrecipients. 2. Peer Review. The peer review of the results of scientific activities under a NOAA grant, financial assistance award or cooperative agreement shall be accomplished to ensure consistency with NOAA standards on quality, relevance, scientific integrity, reproducibility, transparency, and performance. NOAA will ensure that peer review of "influential scientific information" or "highly influential scientific assessments" is conducted in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review and NOAA policies on peer review, such as the Information Quality Guidelines. 3. In performing or presenting the results of scientific activities under the NOAA grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement and in responding to allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, the non-Federal entity and all subrecipients shall comply with the provisions herein and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 202-735D, Scientific Integrity, and its Procedural Handbook, including any amendments thereto. That Order can be found at <http://nrc.noaa.gov/ScientificIntegrityCommons.aspx>. 4. Primary Responsibility. The non-Federal entity shall have the primary responsibility to prevent, detect, and investigate allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. Unless otherwise instructed by the grants officer, the non-Federal entity shall promptly conduct an initial inquiry into any allegation of such misconduct and may rely on its internal policies and procedures, as appropriate, to do so. 5. By executing this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement the non-Federal entity provides its assurance that it has established an administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigating, and reporting allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct; and that it will comply with its own administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigation, and reporting of such misconduct. 6. The non-Federal entity shall insert this provision in all subawards at all tiers under this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement.

REVIEW OF RISK. After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments about any information concerning organizational performance listed in the Responsibility/Qualification section of SAM.gov for consideration by the awarding agency.

REVIEWS AND EVALUATION. The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with the Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with §200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

REQUIRED USE OF AMERICAN IRON, STEEL, MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS. If applicable, and pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build American, Buy American (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52 and OMB M-22-11, recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States—this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and 3) all construction materials¹ are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

WAIVERS. When necessary, recipients may apply for, and DOC may grant, a waiver from these requirements. DOC will notify the recipient for information on the process for requesting a waiver from these requirements. 1) When DOC has made a determination that one of the following exceptions applies, the awarding official may waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference in any case in which DOC determines that: a. applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest; b. the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or c. the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent. A request to waive the application of the domestic content procurement preference must be in writing. DOC will provide instructions on the format, contents, and supporting materials required for any waiver request. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Made in America Office. There may be instances where an award qualifies, in whole or in part, for an existing waiver described at whitehouse.gov/omb/management/made-in-america.

DEFINITIONS. “Construction materials” includes an article, material, or supply—other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives²—that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); glass (including optic glass); lumber; or drywall. “Domestic content procurement preference” means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States; or the construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States. “Infrastructure” includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy. “Project” means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States. -- 1 Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives. 2 IIJA, § 70917(c)(1).

C. Reporting

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted 120 days after the award expiration date and performance (technical) reports are to be submitted semi-annually. Reports are submitted electronically through eRA.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrc.gov/> on all subawards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Part 170.

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.328-9 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions electronically through NOAA’s grants electronic management system, eRA Commons.

Performance reports must be submitted on a semi-annual schedule no later than 30 days following the end of each 6-month period from the start date of the award. Financial reports must be submitted every 6 months by the end of April and October during the period of the award in accordance with the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. NOAA will provide instructions for submitting financial and progress reports upon request. A comprehensive final report is due 120 days after the award expiration date along with copies of all products developed under the award. Copies of all materials (including but not limited to brochures, posters, videos, DVDs, publications, reports, management plans, public service announcements, workshop proceedings) produced through the award, along with copies of any reports submitted by subcontractors as part of the award, must be provided to the program office within 120 days of the end of the award. Except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security, recipients are requested to include a statement on the front page of all products to indicate the material is "Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited." If the applicant has requested publication costs, resulting journal publications must be made available to the public free of charge.

All products must be appropriate for public dissemination and acknowledge the support provided by NOAA CRCP as described at:

<http://coralreef.noaa.gov/about/graphicid.html>. Because products may be made available to the public via the Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS, <https://coris.noaa.gov>), it is the recipient's responsibility to ensure that products are professionally written and edited and do not contain sensitive information (e.g., personnel identification and budget data). Products must be Section 508 compliant (<https://www.access-board.gov/ict/>).

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward

Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards of \$30,000 and over. See 2 CFR 170 at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-I/part-170>.

If equipment or tangible personal property is purchased with grant funds, applicants shall submit an inventory in accordance with Office of Management and Budget guidance that Commerce adopted by regulation at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, which shall be incorporated under the award. The equipment requirements of the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance are set out at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.313.

Recipients must inventory tangible property at least once every two years and at award closeout. As necessary, SF-428 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer. The program office recommends that if the equipment is no longer needed, recipients are encouraged to request disposition instructions for equipment approximately 150 days before the project period ends to allow sufficient time to have equipment disposition requests addressed before a project ends. Equipment disposition instructions typically require that recipients "Submit Additional Closeout Documents" as an award action request in Grants Online. NOAA will provide instructions for disposition in accordance with Office of Management and Budget requirements.

Recipients must submit reports at least annually and at award closeout on the status of real property in which the federal government retains an interest, unless the federal interest in the real property extends 15 years or more. As necessary, SF-429 forms may be attached as an appendix to progress reports or submitted directly to the NOAA program officer.

VII. Agency Contacts

For administrative or technical questions regarding this announcement, contact the competition manager: Liz Fairey. She can be reached by phone at 301-427- 8632 or by email at Liz.Fairey@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Not Applicable.