

NMFS West Coast Region Education and Outreach Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Funding Opportunity Description.....	4
A. Program Objective.....	4
B. Program Priorities.....	4
C. Program Authority.....	5
II. Award Information.....	5
A. Funding Availability.....	5
B. Project/Award Period.....	6
C. Type of Funding Instrument.....	6
III. Eligibility Information.....	6
A. Eligible Applicants.....	6
B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement.....	6
C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility.....	6
IV. Application and Submission Information.....	7
A. Address to Request Application Package.....	7
B. Content and Form of Application.....	7
C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).....	9
D. Submission Dates and Times.....	10
E. Intergovernmental Review.....	10
F. Funding Restrictions.....	10
G. Other Submission Requirements.....	11
V. Application Review Information.....	11
A. Evaluation Criteria.....	11
B. Review and Selection Process.....	13
C. Selection Factors.....	14
D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates.....	15
VI. Award Administration Information.....	15
A. Award Notices.....	15
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	16
C. Reporting.....	18
VII. Agency Contacts.....	19
VIII. Other Information.....	19

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: NMFS West Coast Region Education and Outreach Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-WCRO-2022-2007169

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.454, Unallied Management Projects

Dates: Applications must be submitted to Grants.gov by 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time 60 days from posting of this announcement. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, an application package may be received by contacting:

Desmond Gelman
Grants Management Specialist
NMFS West Coast Regional Office
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
Sacramento, CA 95814-4718
Desmond.gelman@noaa.gov

Use of U.S. Mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt.

When developing your application submission timeline, please keep in mind that the Grants.gov electronic submission system is relatively complex for first-time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted. If you have already used the grants.gov website, the required registrations may have already been completed. Please allow sufficient time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays. Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications not received by the submission deadline will be rejected without further consideration.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two e-mail messages from Grants.gov

updating them on the progress of their application. The first email will confirm receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected due to errors. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive another email when the application has been downloaded by the federal agency.

Funding Opportunity Description: The NMFS West Coast Region (WCR) recognizes the essential role that education and outreach projects and educational partnerships play in the conservation of WCR endangered and threatened species, marine mammals and Species in the Spotlight, which is a NMFS initiative, designating nine specific species that are among the most at risk of extinction in the near future. The nine Species in the Spotlight can be viewed at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/endangered-species-conservation#species-in-the-spotlight>. This competition seeks to support projects that educate, engage and inspire the community to play a role in the conservation of WCR marine resources.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NMFS is seeking applications for the fiscal year 2022 NMFS WCR Education and Outreach Program with a specific focus on conserving and restoring marine resources on the West Coast.

Projects funded under this program should implement and complement one or more actions identified in the WCR Conservation, Endangered Species Act (ESA) Recovery, or Species in the Spotlight Action Plans to recover protected marine species and their habitats.

WCR ESA Recovery

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/endangered-species-conservation/recovery-species-under-endangered-species-act#recovery-plans>

WCR Species in the Spotlight

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/endangered-species-conservation#species-in-the-spotlight>

The NMFS WCR Education and Outreach Program seeks to build an inclusive environment in which diversity (including the representation of all ages, races, national, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, and physical abilities) is considered as we seek to achieve our mission goals and objectives. Therefore, applicants should specifically address their efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, and reduce barriers to broaden participation of historically under-represented groups.

B. Program Priorities

This grant program supports a single education and outreach priority and seeks projects to promote and enhance the community's understanding and stewardship of WCR Protected Resources.

Applications must address one of the (4) four program themes listed below:

Theme 1: Enhance public awareness of Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) status and the threats they face, and educate individuals, students, and organizations on actions they can take to contribute to conservation and support recovery.

Theme 2: Oversee rockfish conservation efforts in the Salish Sea that;

a) conduct action-based education and outreach programs with fishing communities,

organizations, and citizen scientists to increase awareness of, and response to, threats to rockfish, their habitats, and the Salish Sea ecosystem;

b) offer training for citizen science scuba diving programs that report sightings of rockfish, especially young-of-the-year (YOY) fish, through meetings or web-based tools;

c) provide technical support for data collection, processing, review, and sharing from rockfish and submerged aquatic vegetation (e.g., kelp, eelgrass) monitoring efforts with educational institutions and the public.

Theme 3: Enhance public awareness of abalone status and recovery through the development of engaging and relevant displays, outreach materials, and K-adult education programs.

Theme 4: Run an internship program to place undergraduate and graduate students selected annually, who are working toward a degree in the sciences, with NMFS policy makers, scientists, and stakeholder communities to increase public engagement and to inspire individual behavior changes to conserve and protect WCR marine resources. This internship program will address the need for research and education in marine, coastal, and coastal watershed environments, providing students an immersive hands-on experience to increase their environmental literacy and develop outreach and education tools for resource management and public policy. The work by these interns must focus on protected species conservation and sustainable fisheries management to support NMFS' mission to conserve living marine resources and their habitats throughout Washington, Oregon, California and Idaho.

C. Program Authority

16 U.S.C. 661; 16 U.S.C. 753a

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Grant awards for this program are contingent upon availability of WCR Fiscal Year 2022 discretionary funds and future funding year appropriations. Project proposals requesting less than \$5,000 or greater than \$100,000 in federal funding will not be accepted or reviewed. The number of awards made as a result of this solicitation 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 the amount of funds available.

Total funding anticipated to be available for Fiscal Year 2022 is approximately \$540,000. The number of awards anticipated is between 1 and 8 multi-year awards for FY 2022. Proposals must be between \$5,000 and \$25,000 per project year. If a multi-year project is

proposed, funding can be no more than \$25,000 per project year, with no more than \$100,000 in federal funding requested for the entire award. Applications are limited to (1) one application per applicant and must identify the Theme you are applying under.

B. Project/Award Period

The project budget period is recommended to be 12 months in duration. Awards may be multi-year with a maximum duration of (4) four years. Funding beyond year one is contingent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory performance, and is at the sole discretion of the agency. Applications must include project details and a budget for each year of the project. Applicants recommended to receive Federal funding may be asked to modify the project start date. The project start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applicants will either enter into a grant or a cooperative agreement depending upon the amount of NOAA's involvement in the project. Substantial involvement by NOAA in the project would require a cooperative agreement. This substantial involvement may include but is not limited to partnering in collaborative efforts and/or alignment of activities to meet program priorities. Substantial involvement may also include assisting in the development of educational materials and project themes.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are individuals, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies and their employees, as well as Federal instrumentalities (including employees and members), are not eligible to apply. Projects under this competition must be conducted within the WCR states of Washington, Oregon, California, or Idaho.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing or matching is not required.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If you do not have internet access, an application package may be received by contacting:

Desmond Gelman

Grants Management Specialist

NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region

U.S. Department of Commerce

Office: (503) 231-6849

Cell: (503) 530-0274

Desmond.gelman@noaa.gov

B. Content and Form of Application

1. Format Requirements. All application materials should be submitted in PDF (recommended) or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages must be double-spaced, at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed out. Failure to follow these requirements may result in the rejection of the application. A complete standard NOAA grant application package is required in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Your application must contain all required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they **MUST** be signed in ink. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

Each application must include Federal application forms, including:

- a. SF-424
- b. SF-424A, Budget Information, Non-construction Programs must be completed.
- c. SF-424B, Assurances, Non-construction Programs must be completed.
- d. CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- e. SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

And application materials including:

- a. Title Page (described below, limit 1 page)
- b. Project Summary (described below, limit 1 page)
- c. Narrative Project Description (described below, limit 15 pages)
- d. Budget Justification (described below, limit 3 pages)
- e. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- f. CVs/Resumes for each major participant (PIs, Co-PIs, Partners)
- g. Data Sharing Plan (if applicable)
- h. NEPA Questionnaire (if applicable)

2. Content Requirements.

- a. Title Page (1-page limit): The title page should identify the project's title, total budget, start and end dates; and the Principal Investigators (PI's) and co-PI's names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers. The title page must also identify the specific Theme (1 - 4) that is applicable to the project, and total federal funding requested.
- b. Project Summary (1-page limit): The project summary should be a high-level description of the project. The summary should tell the story of what the proposed project will do (project goals and objectives); how the project will be conducted (project activities and timelines, project geographic area, number of participants, etc.); and expected outcomes and benefits of the proposed project.
- c. Project Description (15-page limit): The applicant should describe the project being proposed and address each of the evaluation criteria as described below in Section V. Project descriptions should include clear objectives and specific approaches to achieving those objectives, including methods, timelines, and expected outcomes.
- d. Budget Narrative (3-page limit): Describe the budget in a spreadsheet or other attachment consistent with guidance at:
https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2019/Jun/gmd_budget_narrative_guidance_-_05-24-2017_final.pdf
- e. If an applicant does not have a current indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of MTDC (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov.
- f. CVs/Resumes for each major participant (2-page limit per person): to include PIs, Co-PIs

and Partners.

g. Data Sharing Plan (2-page limit): If the proposed project collects or creates data, a data management plan must be included. 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.

h. NEPA Questionnaire: The NOAA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire is not a requirement for this part of the application process. Should you be awarded funding and it is determined that a NEPA review is required, the NMFS Federal Program Officer will contact you. For more information on this requirement, see section "B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements" and <https://www.nepa.noaa.gov/docs/NOAA-Grants-Questionnaire-final.pdf>.

C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

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)), each applicant is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier 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. The Federal awarding agency 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 the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency 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. Access to SAM may be found at: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act,³¹ U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://sam.gov/content/home>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, which may be accessed at

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=a0bf8eec87fdc493c769fb56ff19a616&mc=true&node=pt2.1.25&rgn=div5#se2.1.25_1315

D. Submission Dates and Times

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Please note: Validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications not received by the submission deadline will be rejected without further consideration.

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 applying 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.

F. Funding Restrictions

NOAA will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for

activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit as allowable costs in the proposed budget. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award, and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be reimbursed for 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. Such expenditures may not be considered as part of the applicant's cost share or matching contribution. Please note, in this competition cost share or matching is not required.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Full Applications should be submitted through www.grants.gov. If you do not have Internet access, an application package may be submitted to:

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NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region
U.S. Department of Commerce
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
Sacramento, CA 95814-4718
Office: (503) 231-6849
Mobile: (503) 530-0274
Desmond.gelman@noaa.gov

Desmond Gelman
NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region
U.S. Department of Commerce
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
Sacramento, CA 95814-4718

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the standard NOAA evaluation criteria. Various questions under each criterion are provided to ensure that the applicant includes information that NOAA will consider important during the evaluation, in addition to any other information provided by the applicant.

Written comments are required to justify provided scores in each section of the review.

Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1. Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Program Goals (25 points).

This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. Does the proposal adequately describe its relevance to the Program Theme in section 1.B? Will the project engage local communities by teaching about ESA protected species and/or species in the spotlight for WCR? Will the projects support outreach efforts throughout the WCR to help in the conservation and/or recovery of ESA protected species and species in the spotlight? Will the project develop a mutual understanding of the priorities, concerns, and challenges that face conservation and/or recovery of ESA protected species and species in the spotlight? Will the project support collaborative efforts that will benefit stakeholders and increase overall sustainability and preservation of ESA protected species and/or species in the spotlight?

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (20 points).

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. Does the Proposal provide a clear definition of the project design, strengths and/or weaknesses and the means that are to be employed for securing productive results? Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Are the objectives in the proposal clearly defined and focused, realistic, and can be reached within the proposed project period? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider ways to resolve the issues or implement alternative tactics? Does the project challenge existing standards or develop new methodologies or technologies? Is sufficient detail provided in the proposal about the methods proposed for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project, and are they appropriate? Does the project demonstrate support, cooperation and/or collaboration with local WCR communities and stakeholders impacted by conservation and recovery efforts of ESA protected species and/or species in the spotlight?

3. Overall Qualifications of the Applicants (15 points).

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Does the applicant have the capacity/knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners that show adequate administrative capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the proposed project? Does the proposal include resumes of the Principal Investigator(s)? In cases where subcontracts are proposed for

carrying out specific tasks, are the quality/appropriateness of the personnel, facilities and procedures (laboratory methods, work plan and or quality oversight procedures) adequate?

4. Project Costs (15 points).

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. This includes reviewing the reasonableness of the costs associated with the required tasks to be performed, and the overall relationship with the cost effectiveness for successfully completing the project. Is the proposed budget cost-effective and realistic based on the applicant's stated objectives, and time frame? Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of costs by object class?

5. Outreach and Education (25 points).

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. Does the proposal specifically address the needs of conservation and recovery efforts for ESA protected species and/or species in the spotlight? Does the proposal identify anticipated benefits, potential users, indicators of success, and methods of disseminating results? Is an effective method proposed for dissemination of project results? Are the various target audiences, such as the local WCR communities or the general public, identified? Does the project identify what the organization has done to encourage diversity and inclusion within their organization? Is there any involvement by traditionally underrepresented groups and/or minority serving organizations/institutions? Will the outreach methods acknowledge NMFS support of the project? If the project collects or creates environmental data, is there a data management and sharing plan that ensures that the data collected and/or created will be made available to general users in a timely manner free of charge, or at minimal cost?

B. Review and Selection Process

Screening, review, and selection procedures will take place in 3 steps: initial screening; merit reviews; and final selection by the Selecting Official (the NOAA/NMFS Regional Administrator).

1. Initial Screening - An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to determine compliance with application requirements and completeness of application materials. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive will be eliminated from further review. When applications are received, they will be screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see Section IV. C. Submission Dates and Times); the applicant is eligible to apply; the proposed project addresses one of the funding priorities; and that the application includes a project summary, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application. We do not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause your application to be rejected so that you would

have an opportunity to correct them. However, should we do so and provide you information about deficiencies, or should you independently decide it is desirable to do so, you may correct any deficiencies in your application before the deadline.

After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it. If your application does not conform to the requirements listed above, and the deadline for submission has passed, the application will be rejected without further consideration.

2. Merit Reviews - After the initial screening, each application will be reviewed by three or more appropriate federal, private or public sector experts (e.g. industry, academia, or governmental experts) with subject matter expertise. The reviewers will evaluate each proposal based on its own merit against the evaluation criteria described in Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria. All applications, regardless of Theme, will be reviewed in this manner. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each project and provide an individual score. After the scores are submitted, a compilation of all proposals in rank order is developed based on the average score from the reviewer scores. These reviewers will be required to certify that they do not have a conflict of interest concerning the application(s) they are reviewing. NOAA will protect the identity of each reviewer to the maximum extent permitted by law.

3. Selection. After applications have undergone the merit reviews, the Selecting Official will make the final decision regarding which applications will be funded based upon the numerical rankings and evaluations of the applications.

C. Selection Factors

The NOAA WCR Regional Administrator, as the Selecting Official, will review the funding recommendation and comments of the reviewers to determine which applications will be recommended to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall recommend proposals to the Grants Officer for funding 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 listed in no order of significance:

A. Availability of funds;

B. Balance/distribution of funds;

1. By research area;

2. By project type;

3. By type of Applicant;

4. By type of partners;

5. Geographic distribution;

C. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies;

D. Program priorities as noted in Section I A. and B.

E. Applicant's prior award performance in conducting a previous award, such as the

applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Selecting Official may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality;

F. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted groups

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding is expected to be complete April 2022. The earliest start date for projects will be April 1, 2022, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements if applicable, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive an email notification from a NMFS Regional representative that the application has been recommended for funding selection to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project, and it is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorizing Representative of the project either electronically through use of Grants Online or in hard copy. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until the Applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email that their proposal was not recommended for funding or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in IV.B (Content and Form of Applications).

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

Award documents provided by the Grants Officer may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements. These special award conditions may also include other compliance

requirements for the award, as applicable, and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award so they are fully aware of the relevant Standard Terms and Conditions as well as any Special Award Conditions that have been placed on the award.

PRE-AWARD COSTS. Per 2 C.F.R. §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 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. 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 90 or more days prior to the period of performance start date require approval from the Grants Officer. This does not constitute prior approval for an applicant to begin the period of performance early.

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.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements

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 <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>

2. 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 CFR Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>

3. Department of Commerce Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package in NOAA's Grants Online system at https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20-%202012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf

4. Limitation of Liability

Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

5. NEPA Requirements

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq., as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508), requires that Federal agencies include in their decision-making processes appropriate and careful consideration of all environmental effects of proposed actions, analyze potential environmental effects of proposed actions and their alternatives, avoid or minimize adverse effects of proposed actions, and restore and enhance environmental quality to the extent practicable. Therefore 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 NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A for NEPA, http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/216-cfr6A.html, 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 its description of its 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.

6. Unpaid or Delinquent Tax Liability

In accordance with Section 523 of Division B and Sections 744 and 745 of Division E of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) or a future

public law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) will be required to provide certain pre-award representations regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns. The form must be completed and submitted with grant applications for: (a) all for-profit and non-profit organization applicants (Part I, and if required, Part II); and (b) all non-Federal entity applicants anticipating receipt of \$5 million or more in the current Federal Fiscal Year appropriated funding (Part II only). The form can be found at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/forms>.

7. 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 Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$30,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

8. 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 or 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 to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports.

1. Financial Status Reports (SF-425)

Financial Status (Cash Flow) Reports are required to be submitted to the Grants Officer semi-annually, or as outlined in the award conditions. Financial Status Reports should be entered directly into the Grants Online system.

2. Performance Progress Reports

Semi-annual progress reports should describe the tasks accomplished within the reporting period (from the proposal and amendments) and the tasks that were actually accomplished in the period, using the evaluation criteria (metrics) for each objective as outlined in your Project Description (see section IV.B.3.c). Basic information that should be in all report submissions includes the project title, award number, dates of the award period, dates of the

reporting period, and the name(s) of the grantee and the principal investigator. Inclusion of media such as photography and statistics (tables, graphs, etc.) to help document programmatic activities in report submissions is also encouraged. The report should also explain any special problems or differences between the scheduled and accomplished work.

3. Publications, Videos, and Acknowledgement of Sponsorship

Publication of the results of the funded award activities in appropriate professional journals, outreach materials, or press releases, and production of video or other media is encouraged as an important method of outreach. The recipient is required to submit a copy of any publication to the funding agency. The recipient is also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Internet sites and videos) based on or developed under an award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following acknowledgment and disclaimer: "This project received funding under award [number] from NOAA. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA."

VII. Agency Contacts

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VIII. Other Information

1. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

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.

2. Minority Serving Institutions

The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Funding Opportunity (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.

3. NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy

Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards: If NOAA-operated, leased, or owned facilities are involved in any awards funded under this announcement, such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving NOAA Operated Facilities (May 2018) found at: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial>

If the use of a vessel(s) under NOAA contract, order, grant, or cooperative agreement is involved in any awards funded under this announcement where the non-Federal entity employees are anticipated to be crew members aboard the vessel(s), such awards are subject to the NOAA Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy Applicable to Financial Assistance Awards Involving the use of a Vessel(s) under NOAA Contract, Order, Grant, or Cooperative Agreement (May 2018) found at: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/acquisition-grants/noaa-workplace-harassment-training-for-contractors-and-financial>