

Fiscal Year 2019 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training Program

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL 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: Fiscal Year 2019 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-NCBO-2019-2005918

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.457, Chesapeake Bay Studies

Dates: The deadline for applications is 11:59 PM Eastern Time on February 20, 2019, when submitting through www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). PLEASE NOTE: for applicants that submit through Grants.gov, it may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. If use of Grants.gov is impractical for technical or other reasons, paper copy applications will be accepted only as described in Section IV.C.

Informational webinars about the FY 2019 Chesapeake B-WET funding announcement will be held on January 8, 2019, at 2:00 PM Eastern Time and January 11, 2019, at 11:00 AM. To register for these webinars, please visit: <https://goo.gl/forms/HjAXQrXztp1VKRaf2>.

Funding Opportunity Description: Funding Opportunity Description: Chesapeake B-WET funds locally relevant, authentic experiential learning for K-12 audiences through Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. MWEEs involve learning both outdoors and in the classroom as students engage in issue definition, outdoor field experiences, synthesis and conclusions, and action projects. The goal is to increase understanding and stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and its local watersheds, including the rivers, upland streams, and natural habitats found throughout the region. Projects advance the environmental literacy goal of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and the NOAA Education Strategic Plan.

This year's funding announcement is focused on systemic programs.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

a. OVERVIEW

NOAA recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, is essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Carefully selected experiences driven by rigorous academic learning standards, engendering discovery and wonder, and nurturing a sense of community will further connect students with their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Environmentally literate individuals can become effective future workers, problem solvers, and thoughtful community leaders and participants.

The NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) environment. B-WET was established in 2002 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and currently exists in seven regions: Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, New England, California, Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, and Great Lakes.

The goal of this funding opportunity is to support K-12 environmental literacy programs that provide students with Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) related to the Chesapeake Bay and related professional development for in-service teachers, administrators, or other educators serving K-12 students. The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are an excellent resource for environmental education. Its tidal and non-tidal waters and the surrounding landscape provide hands-on, place-based laboratories where students can see, touch, and learn about the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the greater environment.

Successful B-WET projects provide formal education that supports the environmental literacy goal of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

(<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/chesapeakebaywatershedagreement/page>)

and NOAA's Education Strategic Plan

(https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2015%20Strategic%20Plan%20Full%20Text%20Web%20Final_0.pdf)

b. DEFINING THE MEANINGFUL WATERSHED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

(MWEE)

The definition of the MWEE that follows was created by the NOAA B-WET National Program and is used by all seven B-WET regions throughout the country. It is based on the MWEE definition developed by the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup, which recently produced “An Educator’s Guide to the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience.” This document provides information and tools to help education professionals develop MWEEs and can be accessed online:

http://baybackpack.com/assets/documents/Educators_Guide_to_MWEE_Download.pdf

MWEEs for students should be learner centered and focused on questions, problems, and issues to be investigated through collecting, analyzing and sharing data; learning protocols; exploring models; and examining natural phenomena. These activities, grounded in best practices and the context of the local community and culture, help increase student interest, motivation, and attitudes toward learning, and achieve environmental stewardship. As a result of the MWEE activities students should have an understanding of basic watershed concepts, as well as the interaction between natural systems (e.g. wildlife, plants, and water cycle) and social systems (e.g. communities, transportation systems, and schools), highlighting the connection between human activity and environmental conditions. MWEEs consist of multiple components as defined below.

MWEEs - Student Components

1.1 Issue definition and background research

Students focus on an environmental question, problem, or issue requiring background research and investigation. They learn more about the issue through classroom instruction, the collection of data, conducting experiments, talking to experts and reviewing credible publications. This process should be age appropriate with practices growing in complexity and sophistication across the grades, starting with educator guided investigation and progressing to student-led inquiry.

1.2 Outdoor field activities

Students participate in multiple outdoor field activities sufficient to collect the data or make observations required for answering the research questions and informing student actions, or as part of the issue definition and background research. Students should be actively involved in planning the investigation, taking measurements, or constructing the project within appropriate safety guidelines, with teachers providing instruction on methods and

procedures, data collection protocols, and proper use of equipment as needed. These activities can take place off-site and/or on the school grounds.

1.3 Stewardship action projects

Students participate in an age appropriate project during which they take action to address environmental issues at the personal or societal level. Participants in B-WET MWEE activities should understand they have control over the outcome of environmental issues, be encouraged to identify actions to address these issues and understand the value of those actions.

1.4 Synthesis and conclusions

Students analyze and evaluate the results of projects and investigations. Students synthesize and communicate results and conclusions to an external audience such as other classrooms, schools, parents, or the community.

2. Support for MWEEs

In addition to the components identified above, NOAA recommends that the following elements are in place to fully support successful MWEE implementation with students.

2.1 Teacher participation for the duration of the MWEE

While external partners are entirely appropriate to support MWEEs, teachers should support the experience in the classroom and in the field. Teachers are in the best position to help students make connections and draw on past lessons, serve as environmental role models, and enhance students overall outdoor education experience and should be involved in all components of the experiences detailed above. To support them in this role, teachers should have appropriate knowledge of environmental issues and watershed concepts, skill in connecting these issues to their curriculum, and competency in environmental education pedagogy, including the ability and confidence to teach outdoor lessons and to lead students in critical thinking about environmental issues.

2.2 Integration with classroom curriculum

Experiences should be integrated into what is occurring in the classroom, and can provide authentic, age appropriate, engaging multi-disciplinary content to address academic standards. Specifically, elements of science and social studies standards related to

questioning and investigation, evidence-based analysis and interpretation, model and theory building, knowledge of environmental processes and systems, skill for understanding and addressing environmental issues, and personal and civic responsibility align well with MWEEs. Non-school activities may enrich traditional classroom curriculum when needed, though this need should be documented and supported by local education agencies.

2.3 Use of the local context for learning

The local community and environment should be viewed as a primary resource for student MWEEs. Place-based education promotes learning that is rooted in the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a students' schoolyard, neighborhood, town or community, and thus offering students and teachers the opportunity to explore how individual and collective decisions impact their immediate surroundings. Once a firm connection to their local environment is made, students are better positioned to expand their thinking to recognize the far-reaching implications of the decisions they make to the larger national and global environment.

2.4 Experiences are a set of activities over time

The MWEE includes the full duration leading up to and following the outdoor field experiences. Each component should involve a significant investment of instructional time, incorporate time for reflection, and include all students. Experiences such as tours, simulations, demonstrations, or nature walks may be instructionally useful, but alone do not constitute an entire MWEE as defined here.

2.5 Includes NOAA assets, including personnel and resources

NOAA has a wealth of applicable products and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts that can heighten the impact of environmental instruction both in the classroom and in the field. Additionally, environmental professionals can serve as important role models for career choices and stewardship. For more on NOAA assets for education please see: <https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/grants/noaa-assets>.

3. Teacher Professional Development for MWEEs

Teachers should be skilled in using environmental education and MWEEs to address multiple subjects' curriculum standards and local education agency initiatives. In order to gain and maintain environmental education competencies, teachers need access to sustained, high quality professional development that includes ongoing support and feedback. Teachers

should gain confidence in the value of MWEEs and strategies for conducting them so that they will conduct MWEEs after the B-WET supported program has ended. Specifically, the following elements are recommended for professional development to support teachers implementing MWEEs:

3.1 Increases teachers' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues

Teachers must have an adequate level of content knowledge for their MWEE topic area specific to their grade level and discipline, including an understanding of basic watershed concepts and the human connection to the watershed. Recognizing that environmental issues often include different perspectives and opinions, teachers must also have a deep understanding of the facts related to environmental issues along with an understanding of the various stakeholder values. In addition, teachers who demonstrate environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviors may be role models for their students and increase their ability to guide students in actions to address complex environmental issues.

3.2 Models environmental education pedagogy

Facilitators/trainers should utilize the same techniques and experiences in trainings that teachers are expected to use with their students, such as hands-on, place-based, outdoor field experiences and environmental issue investigation and action.

3.3 Allows for adequate instructional time

Professional Development trainings should be multi-day, occurring consecutively or over the course of several months. Trainings should include ample opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and planning for how to use knowledge and skills gained from professional development in the classroom.

3.4 Provides ongoing teacher support and appropriate incentives

Even in cases where teachers participate in robust multi-day trainings, such as a summer or weekend courses, it is still essential that professional development providers have a structure in place for on-going teacher support and enrichment. This can take the form of follow up meetings, creating web-based forums for communication and feedback, establishing mentor teachers who can serve as points of contact, or including teams of teachers from one particular school. Continuing education credits and stipends can be used to encourage participation in on-going professional development opportunities. Outreach and training opportunities for school administrators may help increase high level support for both

environmental education and continuing teacher professional development for teachers.

3.5 Meets jurisdictional guidelines for effective teacher professional development

Each jurisdiction has established guidance and recommendations germane to all forms of teacher professional development. When possible, professional development opportunities in environmental education should adhere to these general guidelines set forth by local education agencies.

Information on the Chesapeake B-WET program, including examples of education partnerships that have been funded to date, can be found at <http://go.usa.gov/cjnuA>.

Potential applicants may contact the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (contact information in Section VII) before submitting an application with questions about applicability of project activities to B-WET goals and objectives.

B. Program Priorities

a. B-WET projects under this funding announcement support the direct implementation of the MWEE. In addition, Chesapeake B-WET is intended to serve audiences within the boundaries of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, therefore, only school districts with more than 25% of their land mass falling within the Chesapeake Bay watershed are eligible for funding. A map of school districts meeting this criteria can be found online at the Chesapeake B-WET Applying for a Grant webpage: <https://go.usa.gov/xnRbu>.

Field investigations funded under the Chesapeake B-WET program should occur within the Chesapeake watershed. If they cannot occur within the Chesapeake watershed or an experience outside the watershed is more appropriate for the project, applicants must adequately justify the reasons for this.

b. Proposals to this announcement must address the following Priority Area:

Systemic MWEE Implementation

Chesapeake B-WET focuses on the development and implementation of systemic MWEEs in school districts throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This year's funding announcement is open to all school districts in the watershed, however, NOAA remains interested in expanding the reach of B-WET into school districts that have never received support through the B-WET Program for systemic programs, either through grants directly to school districts or through grants awarded to non-profit organizations, state, agencies,

universities, or other partners to work with school districts on their systemic programs. A list of school districts that have previously received or been served by systemic B-WET grants can be found on the Chesapeake B-WET Applying for a Grant webpage: <https://go.usa.gov/xnRbu>.

Systemic MWEE projects reach the entire student population in one or more grades with teacher-supported MWEEs and ensure that the teachers of these students receive high quality professional development to give them the content knowledge and pedagogical skills for outdoor learning to support all aspects of the MWEE. Projects that are systemic encourage ownership from a broad range of constituents and promote long-term sustainability of the MWEE project in a school district. These programs require leadership and support from the school district, however, because of the broad reach of systemic projects, partnerships with multiple partners are often required to ensure all students receive all components of a MWEE and meaningful professional development for teachers is provided.

While Chesapeake B-WET strongly believes in systemic MWEE implementation, the program recognizes there are organizations and school districts across the watershed that strive to implement high quality MWEE programming, but face challenges in developing and implementing systemic projects that are hard to overcome in a single grant cycle. While every organization faces some barriers to project implementation, these districts have greater challenges due to lack of local resources or partners, policies that conflict with outdoor education, or limited internal capacity. Not being able to become fully systemic over the course of the 3-year grant cycle should not discourage school districts and their partners to apply under this funding announcement as long as they can create meaningful programs with the elements described below.

Students should participate in all MWEE elements (issue definition, outdoor field experiences, synthesis and conclusions, and action projects). MWEEs should be organized around a driving question that has students focus on a locally relevant environmental issue, problem, or phenomenon. Students should engage in background research in order to understand the issue and develop supporting questions for further investigation, and have the opportunity to reflect on personal and stakeholder values and perspectives related to the issue. Applicants should consider the following characteristics of driving questions when developing projects: supports learning objectives; is relevant and related to everyday life, is thought-provoking and intellectually engaging; is open-ended (i.e. typically will not have a single, final, and correct answer); promotes further inquiry (i.e. raises additional questions); encompasses both natural and social systems and topics; requires students to revisit the problem frequently as knowledge and understanding evolves; calls for higher-order thinking, including analysis, inference, prediction, and evaluation; and includes concepts and practices

from multiple disciplines.

Students should participate in multiple outdoor experiences that are directly related to the issue the students are studying. Whenever possible, students should be actively involved in planning the inquiry that occurs during the outdoor field experience. These outdoor experiences should be fully supported by their teachers to ensure that the concepts of watershed education are reinforced in the classroom throughout the school year. Outdoor experiences can support any element of the MWEE and can occur wherever appropriate to reinforce the unit of study, including at partner sites and/or on or near school grounds.

Students should participate in an action project as part of the MWEE. These projects should be directly related to the issue the students are studying. Action projects are most powerful when students are actively involved in planning and implementing the action project to address the issue. Action projects can take many forms, including: Watershed Restoration or Protection (e.g., create schoolyard habitat, planting trees or grasses, invasive species removal, community cleanup, stormwater management); Everyday Choices (e.g., reduce/reuse/recycle/upcycle, composting, energy conservation, water conservation); Community Engagement (e.g., presentations, social media, event-organizing, messaging at community events/fairs/festivals, mentoring, PSAs, flyers, posters); and Civic Action (e.g., town meetings, voting, writing elected officials/decision makers, advocating for policy change). Action Projects related to Civic Action and Community Engagement should be focused on influencing behaviors as opposed to strictly communicating results of their investigations.

Throughout the process students have dedicated class time to make conclusions based on their research, outdoor field experiences, and related data analysis. Students should communicate results and conclusions about what they learned in their research.

Teacher professional development should be offered for all teachers whose students will be engaged in MWEEs so they can support classroom integration.. Based on educational research findings and preliminary evidence from the B-WET national evaluation system, the B-WET program recommends that professional development include at least 30 hours of training, including at least 10 hours spent outdoors. These targets are expected to support teacher change and increase the likelihood that teachers will implement MWEEs.

Professional development should deliver training on both content and instruction in the outdoors, include year-long support for teachers, and include a plan for how teachers will be involved in implementing watershed education with their students. Where appropriate, professional development should include tools for teachers to implement MWEEs on their

school grounds. Resources exist to support the effective hands-on implementation of MWEEs and the development and continued use of integrated, sustainable indoor and outdoor environmental learning projects that provide substantial benefit to both students and the school environment. Please see the School Grounds for Learning resources available at: http://baybackpack.com/schoolyard_projects/about. This kind of in-depth professional development reinforces a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources. If the teacher professional development requirements are not feasible in the targeted school district, applicants should explain why it is not feasible and how they will build towards these requirements over the course of the grant and into the future. If funding requested under this priority area is dedicated solely to providing teacher professional development (i.e. grant dollars are not directly supporting any student MWEE activities), applicants must demonstrate how trained teachers will implement student MWEEs, and what resources (funds, staff, facilities, partner organizations, etc.) exist to support student components of the MWEE. Successful applicants under this priority will be asked to document the number of students receiving MWEEs as a direct result of the project.

Proposals should include details about where the project fits in the scope and sequence of school district curriculum, and applicants should clearly understand and convey the primary learning objectives. Multi-disciplinary objectives are encouraged. Letters of support from curriculum supervisors and science, social studies, and other relevant subject coordinators at the district level can be effective in communicating such details.

Whenever possible, MWEEs should be embedded across an entire grade level or levels, or be part of a broader systemic program in a school district to reach every student. For example, projects may reach only half of a grade level's teachers and students if the application includes documentation from the school district and other partners that the proposed project is a component of a larger systemic effort that reaches the entire grade level. If this is not feasible, applicants should explain why it is not feasible and how they will build toward systemic implementation over the course of the grant and into the future.

Applications for projects can come from any applicant type, however, substantial coordination and support from the school district is required. To document the appropriate level of support and engagement from school districts, official letters from superintendents, school boards, and/or school district curriculum supervisors are requested with proposals.

c. NOAA SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS

Any proposal to this announcement must meet the Priority Area described in the previous

section. NOAA also has an additional Special Interest Area that applicants may wish to address if they choose, which is: Chesapeake Bay Fisheries. More information on the special interest area is provided below. While applicants are not required to address a NOAA Special Interest Area, projects that do so are encouraged because they capitalize on a specific NOAA resource or issue area that is a priority to the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office.

(1) Chesapeake Bay Fisheries. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office is an office under the National Marine Fisheries Service. Our responsibility is to promote ecosystem-based management of fisheries and modeling, monitoring, and research to help identify the most important factors influencing the fisheries of the Chesapeake Bay.

Given this commitment to fisheries, NOAA is interested in projects that develop student understanding around the ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational importance of Chesapeake Bay fisheries including but not limited to blue crab, menhaden, shad, oysters, striped bass, herring, catfish, or sturgeon. Projects addressing this topic area have fisheries as the main issue student's investigate, and include student action to protect or restore the species and/or its habitat.

Fisheries protection could include the implementation of a marketing campaign in the local community using resources from NOAA's sustainable seafood database, FishWatch. They could also include using Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping tools and/or in-the-field surveys to identify high priority wetland habitats that are important nursery grounds and take action to protect those areas in their community. After identifying these areas, students could share information with local decision makers. Proposals could also expose students to "Green Jobs" that are associated with habitat restoration and fisheries management.

C. Program Authority

Under 33 U.S.C. § 893a(a), the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is authorized to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Under this announcement, NOAA anticipates that approximately \$700,000 may be available in FY 2019 to fund new applications, subject to the availability of appropriations. NOAA anticipates making 3-7 new awards. Projects should not exceed \$150,000 annually in Federal funds. Performance periods may be up to three years, but funding beyond the first increment, usually one year, is subject to the incremental funding policy described in Section II.B of this Announcement. The distribution of funding will depend on the Selection Factors in Section V.C. of this Announcement.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not begin before July 1, 2019. Applications should cover a project period of between one and three years. Projects that request multi-year funding must include in their submission a full description of the activities and estimated budget by line item (e.g. personnel, equipment, supplies) for all proposed work for each year.

When a multi-year project is awarded, the scope of work and budget for all years is approved at the time of the award, but funding is usually provided only for the first year of the project with the remainder of the award subject to incremental funding, usually annually. NOAA anticipates continuing these multi-year awards for the entirety of their project periods; however, the agency has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with the award beyond the initial funding increment. Continuation of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance beyond the initial funding increment is at the sole discretion of NOAA and will be contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to the NOAA mission and priorities, and the availability of funds.

Recipients of incrementally-funded projects will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years, and current recipients seeking continued funding of these multi-year awards issued under the incremental funding policy do not need to apply to this funding announcement.

Single-year awards and awards for which NOAA shortens the period of performance are required to re-compete for continued funding after the initial period of performance. Any renewal of the project will depend on the submission of a new proposal subject to review, adequate progress on previous award(s), and available funding.

Future opportunities for submitting proposals to the B-WET competitive process are anticipated, but will depend on funding levels and resources available to support new projects.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Applications selected for funding will be funded through a cooperative agreement under the terms of this notice. Applications funded through cooperative agreements will include substantial involvement of the Federal government, which may include, but is not limited to, collaboration on the scope of work, such as liaison activities between the grantee and NOAA personnel who are contributing data or expertise to the project. Additional forms of substantial involvement that may arise are described in Chapter 5.C of the Department of Commerce (DoC) Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual, which is currently available at: http://www.osc.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Grants%20Manual%20-%20Interim%20Change%201%20-%20Dated%2025%20January%202018.pdf.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are K-through-12 public and independent schools and school systems, institutions of higher education, community-based and nonprofit organizations, state or local government agencies, interstate agencies, and Indian tribal governments. For profit organizations, foreign organizations, and foreign public entities are not eligible to apply; however, for-profit and foreign organizations and foreign public entities may participate with an eligible applicant as a project partner. Likewise, Federal agencies are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this announcement, but may be project partners.

Only school districts with more than 25% of their land mass falling in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are eligible, as described in Section I.B., Program Priorities.

The Department of Commerce/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO) encourages proposals involving any of the above institutions.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost-sharing is not required for this program.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Projects whose sole audience is outside the Chesapeake watershed are not eligible.

Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed. Applications that are lacking any of the required elements of the application or do not follow the form prescribed in IV.B

of this Announcement may not receive merit review as described in Section V.B.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Electronic application packages are strongly encouraged and are available at:
<http://www.grants.gov/> (Grants.gov).

If the applicant has difficulty accessing Grants.gov or downloading the required forms from the NOAA website, they should contact Elise Trelegan at the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office by phone at 410-226-1015, or email at Elise.Trelegan@noaa.gov. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office does not have a direct telephonic device for the deaf, however, TDD capabilities can be accessed through the State of Maryland-supplied TDD contact number, 800-735-2258, between the hours of 8 AM-4:30 PM.

Information on the Chesapeake B-WET program, including examples of currently supported projects, can be found on NOAA's website at <http://go.usa.gov/cjnhk>. Potential applicants may contact the NCBO before submitting an application to discuss the applicability of project ideas to B-WET goals and objectives.

B. Content and Form of Application

Required Elements for Applications:

(a) At the time of application submission, all applicants shall submit the following forms with signatures of the authorized representative of the submitting institution. (Note: submission through Grants.gov results in automatic electronic signatures on these forms.):

1) Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424

2) Budget Information, Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A

3) Assurances, Non-Construction Programs: Form SF-424B

4) Certifications Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511

5) Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable, see instructions on form)

(i) Project Summary (1 page):

1) Project Title

2) Priority Area(s): Systemic MWEE Implementation

3) Project duration: 12 to 36 month project period starting on the first of the month and ending on the last day of the month.

4) Organization and Partnerships: Briefly describe your organization and list your key partners for this grant, if applicable. Partnerships are encouraged.

5) Summary: Provide a brief statement that explains the need for your project and its goals and objectives. In addition, identify what NOAA priority you will address. Your summary should use layman's terms to provide reviewers with an understanding of the purpose and expected outcomes of your educational project. A person unfamiliar with your project should be able to read this paragraph and grasp your plan. More information about NOAA assets and educational resources can be found at: <http://www.education.noaa.gov/>.

6) Delivery Method: Explain how you will reach your audience, such as workshops, field experiences, interactive programs, summer institutes, classroom outreach, etc.

7) Audience: Describe the demographics of your target audience including the school district(s) and the number and types of participants you expect to reach, such as the number of teachers and students reached annually, and the grade level of those participants.

8) Budget Information: Total Federal funding requested this fiscal year; Total Non Federal match for this fiscal year. Total multi-year request and match (if applicable). Please list requested amounts in whole dollars.

(ii) Project Description (up to 12 pages): Describe in detail what your project will achieve with the following headings: What, Who, and How. Explain each aspect of your proposal clearly and address each topic below. Please address all of the following to ensure that grant reviewers can fully comprehend and score your project correctly. Specific Evaluation Criteria are defined in Section V.A.

1) What: Explain the goals and objectives for your project. Include information about how the project contributes to greater understanding and stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, identify the NOAA B-WET program priority and NOAA special interest area,

and how your project incorporates NOAA resources and assets. If your project may trigger consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as described in the NOAA NEPA policy in Section VI.B.4. of this Announcement, applicants should provide relevant information in the project description. Any applicable supporting documents may be included as attachments that do not count toward the page limit. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.1 (Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals).

2) Who: Identify the target audience, and give a precise location of the project and area(s) to be served. Please include specifics of how many students are receiving MWEEs annually in your project, and how many teachers are receiving professional development annually. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical merit)

3) How: This is the logistical work plan for your project and should be the most in-depth section of the project description. Clearly define the activities that will be conducted during this project, and their frequency. Reviewers must be able to determine the duration and frequency of student MWEE activities in the classroom and outdoors, as well as the amount and type of professional development teachers are receiving. If multi-year, provide objectives for each year. Detail how the project meets or supports the definition of the MWEE as defined in this funding opportunity and what NOAA products, services, or staff will be used in program delivery. This section addresses technical merit of the proposal. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical merit).

(iii) Sustainability: Discuss a plan for sustainability of project beyond NOAA funding. Explain how requested funding can build a project that can be sustained after NOAA grant funds expire. List other sources of funding that have been sought for the project and the status of those requests. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.4 (Project Costs).

(iv) Outreach and Education: Projects should include significant external sharing and communication beyond the primary audience (typically students and teachers). Projects should include mechanisms that encourage students and/or teachers to share their knowledge with peers, their school, and their local community. This should focus on students sharing their work and conclusions with other students, teachers, administrators, and/or the community to advance environmental stewardship. This can also include presentations of project design and evaluation at conferences or media outreach about the project. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.5 (Outreach and Education).

(v) Project Evaluation: Evaluation here is defined as the systematic collection and

documentation of information about your project's outcomes in order to improve the project's effectiveness, guide judgments about its impact, and/or inform decisions about future programming or funding. In this section, you must explain your plans for meeting the goals and objectives of your project and for tracking and measuring progress on your outputs and your short-term outcomes. If your medium- and long-term outcomes can also be measured within the project period, explain your plans for that evaluation as well. Evaluation plans may be quantitative and/or qualitative and may include, for example, evaluation tools, observation, or outside consultation. No more than 10% of the budget can be spent on the evaluation component of your proposal. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

If funded by NOAA, grant recipients must be willing to report evaluation results to NOAA. For detailed information on how to create an evaluation plan visit NOAA's website at <http://go.usa.gov/cjQqF>.

Participation in B-WET National Evaluation:

In addition to project evaluation, grantees will be asked to participate in data collection for the national B-WET evaluation. The B-WET national evaluation consists of two parts; part 1 is for all recipients of B-WET grants while part 2 is only for programs that work with teachers. The B-WET national evaluation is intended to monitor program implementation and outcomes on an ongoing basis. Results of this evaluation will be used to improve the B-WET program, document its value, and better tailor it to program audiences. Grantees with teacher participants will be able to view a summary of responses from their participating teachers. Success of this effort depends on grantee participation, so applicants are strongly encouraged to review the information about the national evaluation system (available here: <http://go.usa.gov/x8xwp>) and consider how they can support it as part of their projects.

National Evaluation Part 1 (for all B-WET grantees): As part of this evaluation system, one individual from each recipient organization will be asked to voluntarily complete an online questionnaire once per year of the award. The questionnaire should be able to be completed within 30-60 minutes (depending on the nature of the program) and may require some internal data compilation.

National Evaluation Part 2 (for programs with teacher professional development): For projects that work extensively with teachers, the teacher-participants will be asked to complete one questionnaire at the close of their professional development and one after implementing MWEEs with their students (at the end of the following school year). Each teacher questionnaire should be able to be completed within 30 minutes. Along with

completing the recipient questionnaire, grantees will be asked to provide the email addresses of participating teachers (after notifying teachers that their email will be shared) and to encourage teachers to participate in the national evaluation.

B-WET grantees and teachers who respond to the questionnaires will remain anonymous to B-WET and NOAA. NOAA will only view the resulting data in aggregate at the national or regional level; however, grantees will receive a password-protected report link to allow them to view data from teacher participants of their project in aggregate.

All applicants should provide information about how they plan to support this national evaluation system, incorporate it into the project timeline, and ensure responses from participating teachers as part of their application. Applicants may incorporate staff time required to complete the B-WET national evaluation in their budget proposal. More information, including all of the survey instruments, is available on the NOAA B-WET National Evaluation website here: <http://go.usa.gov/xkc7P>.

Grantees should review the information available and take this into consideration in the planning for their project evaluations. For example, grantees may not need to include questions that will be answered through the teacher instrument in their own evaluations. Wherever possible grantees should try to incorporate participation in the evaluation system into existing requirements for professional development program completion. For example, on completion of the teacher professional development survey, teachers will receive some program incentive.

Note that this evaluation system is not intended to replace project level evaluation. While grantees will have access to their teacher's results from the evaluation system, the national evaluation may not provide the level of detail needed to fully understand, describe, and improve specific grant projects. Grantees are therefore encouraged to balance these needs within their planning and budgeting process.

Additional information about this project, including background, FAQs, survey instruments, and suggested text for communicating with your teacher participants about this project, is available here: <http://go.usa.gov/xkc77>.

(b) APPENDICES (not included in 10-page limit):

(i) Budget Justification: Provide a detailed spreadsheet with narrative to support the requested items or activities (personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs, and indirect costs). If applying for multiple years of funding, the budget

should be broken down for each year requested. Applicants are encouraged to use the B WET budget template found at <http://go.usa.gov/cjQaG>. The budget justification submitted with the application should match the dollar amounts on the required Forms SF- 424 and SF- 424A. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.4 (Project Costs).

For Maryland applicants: Specify how much funding has been requested from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Environmental Education Grants Program to support the project, if such funding has been requested.

For multi-year projects: Ensure that there is a detailed budget narrative detailing the budget requested for each year matching each Form SF-424A.

Grant recipients will be encouraged to attend a state or regional B-WET meeting once during the duration of their grant. This will be an opportunity for former and current B-WET grant recipients to present their B-WET projects and learn from each other. This meeting may be part of an existing state conference environmental or science education conference to minimize travel expenses. Budgets should include, in the travel category, estimated funds for this meeting (such as meals, lodging, and transportation including rental car, shuttle, or taxi). No more than \$1,000 should be budgeted for this expense.

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs, which are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See 2 C.F.R. 200.56-.57 and 200.412-.415 at <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>. An applicant may also propose all allowable project charges as direct costs.

An applicant requesting indirect costs should provide a current approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement established with its cognizant Federal agency or an acknowledgement letter from the cognizant agency to which the applicant has submitted a proposed rate. In addition, if an award recipient has never established an indirect cost rate with any Federal agency, the recipient may request to use the de minimus rate described at 2 C.F.R. 200.414 or it may negotiate a new rate with the Department of Commerce. The negotiation and approval of a new rate is subject to the procedures required by the NOAA and the Department of Commerce. The U.S. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, <https://go.usa.gov/xRuaF>, require that within 90 days of the award start date, recipients submit documentation (indirect cost proposal, cost allocation, plan, etc.) necessary to perform the review to establish a new rate to the address listed below.

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

(ii) Timeline: Include a project schedule that indicates when each action, event, milestone, product development, and evaluation will occur. Timelines should be detailed enough for reviewers to ascertain the number and duration of teacher and student contacts. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

(iii) Environmental Literacy Model for MWEE Integration: Include a document that illustrates how the proposed project will meet the full definition of the MWEE, including being embedded into school curriculum, using issue investigation, and conducting a stewardship action project. The document should include brief (2-3 sentence) descriptions about how the proposed project will address the following information. A template can be found at: <http://baybackpack.com/assets/documents/ELM.pdf>.

1) Defining the Learning objectives, curricular indicators, and/or performance expectations to be reached during the course of study

2) Identifying the Driving question that will guide inquiry for the investigation

3) Determining the Local context that will establish the relatable connections and life-relevancy of the content and core ideas

4) Defining the issue to be investigated and develop focused questions that are relevant for investigation

5) Planning and conducting student investigations

6) Analyzing and interpreting data from their investigations

7) Constructing, communicating, and refining explanations about findings from their investigations

8) Developing a claim and identifying solutions about their investigations

9) Designing a plan and taking informed actions to address their issue

10) Evaluating the effectiveness of the action taken to address their issue

This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.2 (Technical Merit).

(iv) Technical Experience and Qualifications: Attach a description of your programmatic capabilities and ability to successfully implement and manage the proposed project including staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them to successfully achieve the goals of the project, and your organizational experience and past history in performing tasks similar to the proposed project. Also include a paragraph describing qualifications of each of the key personnel conducting the project. If you send resumes for the key personnel conducting the project, please keep them to a maximum of three, one-page resumes. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.3 (Overall Qualifications of Applicants).

(v) Partnership Letters of Commitment: If the applicant organization has partners, such as school districts, state agencies, or other organizations, include letters of commitment from partners explaining their role in and/or funding of the proposed project. Do not include letters of endorsement from previous participants, teachers, or others not directly involved in project implementation, except letters from school district personnel demonstrating support and/or articulating where MWEEs will align with district curriculum. Letters should be received as part of application submission. This section will be scored using evaluation criterion V.A.3 (Overall Qualifications of Applicants).

(vi) Results from prior NOAA support: If any principal investigator (PI) or co-PI identified on the project has received support from NOAA in the past five years, information on the prior award(s) is required. The following information should be provided:

- 1) The NOAA award number, amount and period of support;
- 2) The title of the project;
- 3) Summary of the results of the completed work (including # of teachers/students);
- 4) If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

(vii) Data Sharing Plan: Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages. This Data Management Plan does not count against the 12-page Project Description page limit. The Data Management Plan should be

aligned with the NOAA B-WET Data Management Guidance provided below and will be considered as part of proposal review. 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. 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.

Data Management Guidance to Applicants

The NOAA B-WET program has developed this guidance to help grant applicants plan to share quality environmental data collected as part of their B-WET funded projects, where applicable. Environmental Data are defined by NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 212-15: Management of Environmental Data and Information as recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Digital audio or video recordings of environmental phenomena (such as animal sounds or undersea video) are included in this definition. Numerical model outputs are included in this definition, particularly if they are used to support the conclusion of a peer-reviewed publication. Data collected in a laboratory or other controlled environment, such as measurements of animals and chemical processes, are included in this definition.

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.

Proposals submitted in response to this announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements apply to the proposed project and will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan will be considered as part of the proposal review. Note that the Federal Program Officer may require revisions to the applicant's Data Management Plan prior to recommending the application for funding. Applicant Data Management Plans should be aligned with the following Data Management Guidance.

If environmental data collected/generated as part of the project are primarily for education and/or the practice of making observations using scientific techniques/methods (e.g. measuring pH of water with a refractometer, measuring atmospheric humidity with a sling psychrometer, measuring percent vegetative cover using a transect, etc.) and are not intended to be shared with scientists outside of the educational program, applicants may request permission not to make data publicly accessible and obtain approval from the Federal Program Officer, if funded. In this case, this element of the application should consist of a paragraph (under the heading "Data Management Plan") describing the intended use of the data and that an exemption from data sharing is requested.

If environmental data collected/generated as part of the project are for purposes beyond education and/or the practice of making observations using scientific techniques/methods, applicants should describe (up to 2 pages, under the heading "Data Management Plan") how data will be shared, based on the following guidance:

Contents: A typical Data Management 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 plan should describe or reference the data quality control techniques that will be used or note that the data will not be quality controlled. Data that is not quality controlled should include a description on the limitations of the data or an indication of degree of uncertainty.

Technical recommendations: The NOAA B-WET program does not offer specific technical guidance. Applicants should describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged.

Data Accessibility: The NOAA B-WET program recommends that public access to grant produced data be enabled via an existing publicly accessible online data server at the funded institution is to be used to host these data (describe in application); or a public data repository appropriate to this scientific domain (describe in application). (e.g. The GLOBE Program - <http://www.globe.gov/>, CoCoRaHS Community - <http://www.cocorahs.org/>); or recipient-established data hosting capability (please describe in application's Data Management Plan).

Resources: Proposals are permitted to include the costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving in their budgets.

Questions Regarding This Guidance

Responsible NOAA Official for questions regarding this guidance and for verifying accessibility of data produced by funding recipients: Elise Trelegan, NOAA Fisheries, Elise.Trelegan@noaa.gov, 410-226-1015.

(viii) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): Consistent with Section IV.B.(a)(ii) and Section VI.B.4. of this Announcement, if any permits, permit requests, maps, or other supporting NEPA documents are applicable to your project, they may be included as attachments.

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

The registration described here and in Section IV.F. implements requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note. Under this law, to enable the use of a universal identifier and to build the quality of information available to the public, any application awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Data Universal Numbering System and Federal System for Award Management referenced below to the extent applicable.

Each applicant (unless an exception arises under 2 C.F.R. 25) is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier (e.g. DUNS number) 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. See 2 C.F.R. Part 25, <http://go.usa.gov/cTbMk>.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be received by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on February 20, 2019, if submitting through Grants.gov. PLEASE NOTE: After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two email 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 before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected

because of errors. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive a third email when the application has been downloaded by the federal agency.

If use of Grants.gov is impractical for technical or other reasons, paper copy applications will be accepted at the address listed in Section VII. Paper copies may be submitted by postal mail or commercial delivery service. Applications submitted by mail must include a SF-424 form with original ink or valid electronic signature and date from an authorized recipient organization representative, and must be stamped with an official U.S. Postal Service postmark or provided to a commercial carrier with tracking number and receipt on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time on February 20, 2019; private metered postmarks are unacceptable. Paper applications received more than three business days after the deadline will not be reviewed, and applicants submitting by paper are responsible for tracking their applications. No email or fax copies will be accepted. To submit a hand-delivered application, applicants should make advance arrangements with NOAA by contacting the official listed in Section VII. of this Announcement, and the application must be received by 4 p.m. Eastern Time on February 20, 2019.

Informational webinars will be held on January 8, 2019, at 2:00 PM Eastern Time and January 11, 2019, at 11:00 AM. To register for these webinars, please visit: <https://goo.gl/forms/HjAXQrXztp1VKRaf2>.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

F. Funding Restrictions

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Uniform Requirements), found at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. 1327.101. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, and training, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable." Construction costs are not allowed.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the application deadline date to

begin the application process through <http://www.grants.gov>. In developing your submission timeline, note that validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission.

In addition, potential funding applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted, and first-time registration with Grants.gov can take up to three weeks or more. It is therefore strongly recommended that this registration process be completed as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date. Also, even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or their registration may need to be renewed prior to submitting to Grants.gov. Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days or longer to establish.

To use Grants.gov, an applicant must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>, and periodic renewals are required. Allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration. (Note: Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.) Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

The Grants.gov site contains directions for submitting an application, the application package (forms), and is also where the completed application is submitted. Applicants using Grants.gov must locate the downloadable application package for this solicitation by the Funding Opportunity Number or the CFDA number listed in the Executive Summary of this Announcement. Applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

After electronic submission of the application through Grants.gov, the person submitting the application will receive within the next 24 to 48 hours two email 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 before transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected because of errors. After the application has been validated, this same person will receive another email when the application has been downloaded by the Federal agency. Only validated applications are sent to NOAA for review, and the validation time is deemed the time NOAA received it.

If you experience a Grants.gov “systems issue” (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before an applicable funding cycle deadline, please (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note: problems with an applicant organization’s computer system or equipment are not considered “systems issues.” Similarly, an applicant’s failure to: (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered Authorized Organizational Representative submits the application, or (iii) receive an email message from Grants.gov validating or rejecting its application are not considered systems issues. NOAA is not required to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause the application to be rejected or receive a poor evaluation. However, if deficiencies are identified by NOAA or the applicant, the applicant may correct any deficiencies in their application through resubmission before the deadline. A Grants.gov “systems issue” is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov system, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed “systems issue,” or a significant natural disaster affecting submission, NOAA may allow more time for applicant submission due to system problems at Grants.gov at the time of application submission that are beyond the control of the applicant.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (27 points)

This criterion assesses whether the proposed work addresses B-WET program goals and priority areas, and if the project is relevant to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities.

- a. Does the project make a clear effort to increase environmental stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and/or its watershed in students? (8 points)
- b. Does the project reach all students and relevant teachers in a school district? (5 points)
- c. Does the applicant clearly document that the proposed project is part of building or supporting a broader systemic program in a school district? (7 points)

d. Are the school district(s) proposed in the application new to receiving support through the B-WET Program for systemic programs (either through grants directly to school districts or through grants awarded to non-profit organizations, state, agencies, universities, or other partners to work with school districts on their systemic programs)? (7 points)

2. Technical merit (43 points)

This criterion assesses whether the project adequately meets the full definition of the MWEE, is logistically feasible, and technically sound.

a. Will the project result in students conducting issue identification and background research? (4 points)

b. Will the project result in outdoor field experiences for students? (5 points)

c. Will the project result in student-directed stewardship action projects? (4 points)

d. Will the project result in students creating and sharing the synthesis and conclusions from their project? (3 points)

e. Does the applicant demonstrate that the project will be fully embedded into school curriculum during the school day? (4 points)

f. Does the project include adequate teacher involvement? Is proposed professional development multi-day and meet criteria set forth in section 3 of the MWEE definition in this announcement? (9 points)

g. Does the application clearly describe how the project will be executed logistically and include details sufficient to determine that all elements of the MWEE are present and/or teachers are receiving adequate professional development? Examples of such logistical details include the duration of teacher professional development, locations for student field experiences, or number of times students are learning outdoors. (10 points)

e. Does the applicant provide an effective evaluation strategy to determine if project objectives and outcomes are being met? Does the applicant address how they will participate in the B-WET National Evaluation? (4 points)

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (10 points)

This criterion assesses whether the applicant possesses the necessary experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

- a. Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the target community, including in depth understanding of schools and school systems? (2 points)
- b. Does the applicant demonstrate the capability and experience to successfully complete similar projects? (3 points)
- c. Does the proposal include partnerships that contribute to project implementation, and are those partners documented with support letters detailing how they'll support the project (as opposed to simply voicing support)? (5 points)

4. Project costs (16 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

- a. Is there sufficient detail to verify that the budget request is reasonable for the number of participants and/or target audience to be reached? (7 points)
- b. Does the proposal adequately address project sustainability after NOAA funding? Are funding sources or strategies included that will sustain the project beyond the grant period? (5 points)
- c. Are the requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in the implementation of the proposed project? (2 points)
- d. Does the budget adequately detail the amount of time each individual will spend on the project and this is a reasonable amount of staff time for such a project? (2 points)

5. Outreach and education (4 points)

This criterion assesses whether the project involves mechanisms for significant external sharing and communication about the project by students, teachers, or project staff? This includes consideration of the Data Sharing Plan described in Section IV.B.(b)(vii) of this Announcement.

- a. Events that engage school boards, public officials, parents, community organizations,

other schools, or the media. (2 points)

b. Peer to peer sharing for teacher and/or student (in-service days, school assemblies, etc.) is proposed. (2 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted on each timely received application to assure that it is eligible, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

Applications that are cleared for meeting minimum requirements will be moved into merit review and evaluated by a two-phase review process; a preliminary technical review and a panel review meeting. Both phases are conducted by the same set of private and/or public sector expert reviewers. Each review phase is described in detail below, followed by post-merit-review procedures.

Technical Review:

The purpose of the technical review is to evaluate each proposal's technical merit via individual evaluations of the proposals. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of three reviewers. Reviewers provide comments (which can be shared with applicants after the competition has concluded) and assign scores to the applications based the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of this federal funding opportunity. If more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, no consensus advice will be given.

Based on the results of the individually scored proposals, the Program Officer will prepare a preliminary ranked list of proposals. This preliminary rank order will be used in the subsequent panel meeting where final funding recommendations are made.

Panel Review:

A panel review meeting will be held following the technical review process. The purpose of the panel meeting is to discuss in-depth the proposals and to get final funding recommendations from reviewers. This in-depth discussion may raise issues or answer questions that a reviewer did not have in the technical review, or it may clarify an issue. After discussing proposals, panelists will provide comments and a final score for each application, upon which a final rank order is established. If more than one non-Federal

reviewer is used, no consensus advice will be given by the panel.

Up to four separate review events may be held depending on geography or type of applications received. Scores from separate review events will not be combined to establish an overall rank order.

Project Selection

The Chesapeake B-WET Coordinator may, in consultation with NCBO staff, review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel and make recommendations to the Selecting Official, who is expected to be the Director of the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office or designee. The rank order from the review panel will be the primary consideration for the Selection Official in deciding which of the new proposals will be recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. However, the Selecting Official will select proposals after considering the recommendations of the review panel, and recommendations of the Chesapeake B-WET Coordinator. The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the Selection Factors described in Section V.C. of this Announcement. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future without re-competition, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant and NOAA officials. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA's efforts to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as described in Section VI.B. of this Announcement, and other legislation.

Grants Management 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. 200.205. If Federal funding will be over \$150,000 over the period of performance, NOAA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. NOAA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

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. 200.207. NOAA also reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. In addition, NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management requirements referenced in Section VI.B. of this Announcement, 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. 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.

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted on each timely received application to assure that it is eligible, responsive, and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured.

Applications that are cleared for meeting minimum requirements will be moved into merit review and evaluated by a two-phase review process; a preliminary technical review and a panel review meeting. Both phases are conducted by the same set of private and/or public sector expert reviewers. Each review phase is described in detail below, followed by post-merit-review procedures.

Technical Review:

The purpose of the technical review is to evaluate each proposal's technical merit via individual evaluations of the proposals. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of three reviewers. Reviewers provide comments (which can be shared with applicants after the competition has concluded) and assign scores to the applications based the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of this federal funding opportunity. If more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, no consensus advice will be given.

Based on the results of the individually scored proposals, the Program Officer will prepare a preliminary ranked list of proposals. This preliminary rank order will be used in the subsequent panel meeting where final funding recommendations are made.

Panel Review:

A panel review meeting will be held following the technical review process. The purpose of the panel meeting is to discuss in-depth the proposals and to get final funding recommendations from reviewers. This in-depth discussion may raise issues or answer questions that a reviewer did not have in the technical review, or it may clarify an issue. After discussing proposals, panelists will provide comments and a final score for each application, upon which a final rank order is established. If more than one non-Federal reviewer is used, no consensus advice will be given by the panel.

Up to four separate review events may be held depending on geography or type of applications received. Scores from separate review events will not be combined to establish an overall rank order.

Project Selection

The Chesapeake B-WET Coordinator may, in consultation with NCBO staff, review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel and make recommendations to the Selecting Official, who is expected to be the Director of the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office or designee. The rank order from the review panel will be the primary consideration for the Selection Official in deciding which of the new proposals will be recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Officer. However, the Selecting Official will select proposals after considering the recommendations of the review panel, and recommendations of the Chesapeake B-WET Coordinator. The Selecting Official shall award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the Selection Factors described in Section V.C. of this Announcement. NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future without re-competition, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized.

Please note that not all activities submitted under a single proposal may be deemed appropriate for funding, and the Selecting Official may recommend alternate activities as appropriate or only partial funding, based on the selection factors and the merit and/or panel review written evaluations. For a proposal to be selected for funding, the applicant may be asked to modify objectives and activities, work plans, and budgets, and to provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. This may result in submission of a revised application before final funding decisions are made. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and other relevant application details will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant and NOAA officials. Applicants should also note that modifications to projects may be necessary as a result of NOAA's efforts to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as described in Section VI.B. of this Announcement, and other legislation.

Grants Management 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. 200.205. If Federal funding will be over \$150,000 over the period of performance, NOAA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is

currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. NOAA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

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. 200.207. NOAA also reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. In addition, NOAA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management requirements referenced in Section VI.B. of this Announcement, 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. 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.

C. Selection Factors

In implementing the selection process described above in Section V.B. of this Announcement, the Selecting Official may select a proposal out of rank order if justified based upon the following factors:

1. Availability of funding

2. Balance/distribution of funds

- Geographically
- By type of institutions
- By type of partners
- By priority areas
- By project types

3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies

4. Program priorities and areas of interest as set out in section I. B of this FFO, including projects serving school districts that have not received a NOAA B-WET grant to support systemic MWEs.

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.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during the three months following the date given in this announcement that the full proposals are due to NCBO and notification, and applicants may receive communications to negotiate a potential award in April 2019. Final issuance of awards or declinations are expected by August 2019. No date prior to July 1, 2019 should be used as the proposed start date on proposals.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been approved for

funding with an official notice of award, the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer, and accompanying award package. The CD-450 award cover page is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>. The CD-450 (including associated terms it incorporates by reference) is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin.

The award may be issued to the authorizing official and the principal investigator of the project in hard copy if necessary but will ordinarily be issued electronically via an email from NOAA's electronic grants management system, Grants Online, at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov>. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with this system. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification from the NOAA program office indicating that their proposals were not recommended for funding.

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at <https://go.usa.gov/xPGmB>. These terms will be provided in the award package in Grants Online.

In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental or other compliance requirements and may lead to modification of the project's scope of work, and will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award to ensure they are fully aware of the relevant terms that have been placed on the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Pre-Award Notice

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 Announcement and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

2. Uniform Administrative Guidance

The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, applies to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

3. Limitation of Liability

There is no guarantee that funds will be available to make awards for any or all qualified projects pursuant to this Announcement or that any proposal will be selected for funding. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the competition described in this notice and are advised that the competition described herein may be subject to cancellation due to unavailability of funding or revision of agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award funding for specific projects, or obligate available funds. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, it does so at its own risk of not receiving an award or of these costs not being included in a subsequent award. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award costs for awards that have not been designated as “research” unless approved by the Grants Officer as part of the terms when an award is made. NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for any proposal preparation costs. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded to a meritorious applicant will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all federal laws and agency policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to federal financial assistance awards. Funded awards are subject to enforcement and termination provisions under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342.

4. 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 Web site at www.nepa.noaa.gov, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA at http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations website at <https://ceq.doe.gov/laws-regulations/regulations.html>.

Consequently, applicants may be asked to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, number and species expected to be caught, 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 of 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. The 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 of any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

If your project may trigger consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), identify any impact the proposed work will have on the quality of the environment by completing the NOAA NEPA Questionnaire at the following link (<http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/questionnaire.pdf>) and include it as an appendix to your application. This NEPA appendix does not count against the 12-page Project Description page limit.

5. Felony and Tax Certification

Where required in accordance with applicable Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representative making a certification regarding any applicable Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

6. 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:
http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/facilities_assault_policy.html.

C. Reporting

(a) In addition to Evaluation Reporting described in Section IV.B.(a)(v) of this Announcement, financial and performance progress reporting requirements are described in the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions and 2 C.F.R. 200.327-.200.329, referenced above in Sections VI.A. and B. of this Announcement, and further implemented as described below.

1. Financial Reports - Information about federal financial reports is available at:
<http://go.usa.gov/cjE4T>

2. Performance/Progress Reports - Suggested content and guidance related to Chesapeake B-WET performance/progress reports can be found here: <http://go.usa.gov/cjE2B>

(b) 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 over \$25,000. Refer to 2 C.F.R. Part 170 at <http://go.usa.gov/cT8WW>.

VII. Agency Contacts

Please visit the Chesapeake B-WET Applying for a Grant webpage:
<https://go.usa.gov/xnRbu> or contact Elise Trelegan at the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office by phone at 410-226-1015, or email at Elise.Trelegan@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

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, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflicts of interest and nondisclosure 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 Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 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.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552)- Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA 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 FFO 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 which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.