RESTORE Act
Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program

U.S Department of the Treasury
Office of Gulf Coast Restoration

Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: GR-RCE-15-002

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number: 21.015

Key Dates: Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis as long as funds are available in an applicant's allocation. This funding opportunity announcement will close on July 31, 2015. A new funding opportunity announcement may be posted again in August 2015, as determined necessary by Treasury.

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Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

PART 1

1. **Federal Awarding Agency**: Office of Gulf Coast Restoration, Department of the Treasury

2. **Funding Opportunity Title**: RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program

3. **Announcement Type**: Initial

4. **Funding Opportunity Number**: GR-RCE-15-002

5. **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number**: 21.015

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PART 2

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Under the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act), Subtitle F of P.L. 112-141, the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund was established in the Treasury of the United States. Eighty percent of the civil penalties paid after July 6, 2012, under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act in connection with the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill will be deposited into the Trust Fund and invested. The RESTORE Act created five components through which funds will be disbursed.

Treasury is publishing multiple funding opportunity notices as part of the RESTORE Act. This announcement applies only to the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program.

Trust Fund amounts are available to establish one or more Centers of Excellence through competitive subawards to nongovernmental entities and consortia in the Gulf Coast Region, including institutions of higher education. Funds may be used by those

Centers of Excellence to conduct research only on the Gulf Coast region in one or more of the following disciplines:

1. Coastal and deltaic sustainability, restoration and protection, including solutions and technology that allow citizens to live in a safe and sustainable manner in a coastal delta in the Gulf Coast Region;
2. Coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring in the Gulf Coast Region;
3. Offshore energy development, including research and technology to improve the sustainable and safe development of energy resources in the Gulf of Mexico;
4. Sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development in the Gulf Coast Region; and
5. Comprehensive observation, monitoring, and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico.

II. Federal Award Information

A. Total Funding Availability

The total funding available for eligible activities under the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program is dependent upon amounts in the Trust Fund. The amounts available will depend on the Trust Fund balance, any adjustments due to sequestration, pursuant to section 251A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, and any adjustments due to obligations and disbursements through grants awarded to eligible recipients.

B. Award Amount

Each of five eligible applicants may apply for its share of funds, described in Treasury regulations as a percentage of the amounts available from the Trust Fund for the Centers of Excellence Research Grants Program. An eligible applicant may apply for up to 100 percent of its allocation. Treasury will notify eligible applicants when revisions are made to the allocation tables, which include the amounts currently available and posted on the Treasury RESTORE Act website at: http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx.

C. Anticipated Award Date

Treasury anticipates making a grant award within 60-90 days after receipt of a compliant application.

D. Period of Performance

Eligible applicants may submit one or more applications, each covering a performance period ("Project Period") of one to five years.

E. Funding Instrument Type

Awards will be made as grants to eligible applicants.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are specified by the RESTORE Act and regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 34. Only the following entities may apply for funding under this announcement: the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council or a designated administrative agent; the Florida Institute of Oceanography; the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board of Louisiana; the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality; and the Office of the Governor of the State of Texas, or an appointee of the Governor.

Only the above-named entities are eligible applicants who may apply for funding. Treasury does not make Centers of Excellence Research grants directly to other entities or individuals. Interested third parties may contact their jurisdiction listed in the above paragraph to learn more about how the eligible applicants select their Centers of Excellence.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing or matching is required.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Each applicant must complete an Operational Self-Assessment and must update the Operational Self-Assessment annually by June 30. Annual Operational Self-Assessments must be reviewed and accepted by Treasury before funds may be awarded for an application under this announcement. The required format and fillable form for the Operational Self-Assessment, as well as instructions for completing it, may be found on Treasury's RESTORE Act website at http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx.

IV. Application Preparation and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Treasury will be using the GrantSolutions.gov system to manage the application submission process, and application packages will only be made available through GrantSolutions.gov at https://www.grantsolutions.gov/gs/. Only eligible applicants, as defined in Section III, will be able to register with GrantSolutions.gov. Eligible applicants must register with GrantSolutions.gov

and log in using the provided account information in order to access the various funding opportunity announcements and associated application packages available under the RESTORE Act.

During the application preparation process, eligible applicants should be sure to access and complete the specific application package within GrantSolutions.gov that corresponds to the correct RESTORE Act component or activity since there are multiple funding opportunity announcements available, each having their own specific instructions, forms, and required attachments.

If you are an eligible applicant and require further information, need assistance with the GrantSolutions.gov account registration process, or if you do not have Internet access, contact Treasury using the contact information provided below in Section VII, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts.

Information also is available on Treasury's RESTORE Act website at http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx.

B. Content and Form of Application

All applications must be completed and submitted using the application packages provided by GrantSolutions.gov (https://www.grantsolutions.gov/gs). An application must be submitted by the Authorizing Official enrolled in GrantSolutions.gov.

Application packages will include the required standard forms and specific documentation required by Treasury. If an item specifies the use of a template, then the applicant is required to download the template from within the GrantSolutions.gov application package, complete the template, and upload the completed template, in its native file format, as part of the application preparation process.

Information that is not part of a standard form or a Treasury template included in the application package can be provided as part of a separate file attachment that is uploaded into the application package. **All file attachments must be in PDF file format, unless otherwise specified in this FOA or application guidance.**

Any files uploaded into the GrantSolutions.gov application package must contain a valid file format extension in the filename. Any file submitted as part of the GrantSolutions.gov application package that is not in a PDF file format or in another format otherwise specified in this FOA, or contains password protection, will not be accepted for processing and will be excluded from the application during the review process. In addition, the use of compressed file formats such as ZIP, RAR or Adobe Portfolio will not be accepted. Scanned copies should not be submitted through GrantSolutions.gov unless the applicant confirms the clarity of the documents. Documents must be scanned after they are signed. Pages cannot

be reduced in size resulting in multiple pages on a single sheet to avoid exceeding any page count limitations. All documents that do not conform to the above will be excluded from the application during the review process.

The following items are required:

1. Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.
2. Form SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs.
3. Form SF-424B, Assurances – Non-construction Programs.
4. Centers of Excellence Financial Assistance Application *(completion of template required)*. The applicant must:
   a. Identify the applicant organization.
   b. Provide information about the competitive selection process. Please cite relevant state statutes or regulations as applicable.
   c. Select the eligible discipline(s) on which the Center(s) will focus.
   d. Describe the applicant's procedures for managing subrecipients and subawards.
   e. Describe how public input on Centers of Excellence rules and policies was solicited and considered, and provide relevant documentation of the public review and comment period.
   f. Provide a scope of work that includes tasks and major milestones for the entire project period and how those tasks relate to the proposed budget.
   g. Provide a justification of the proposed budget that corresponds to the tasks and major milestones identified.
   h. Provide other information requested in the Financial Assistance Application.
5. A letter from the applicant's highest official designating a senior authorized official who can legally bind the entity to execute the RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Applicant Certifications. A letter is not required if the applicant's highest official executes the certifications.
6. RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Applicant Certifications *(completion of template required)*, signed by the senior authorized official.
7. SF-LLL *(completion of template required)* if applicable (see 31 C.F.R. Part 21). If submitted, the SF-LLL must be signed by the senior authorized official.
8. Centers of Excellence Status of Performance Report *(completion of template required)*. The applicant must select appropriate performance measures that will be tracked throughout the period of performance.
9. Federally approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if indirect costs are included in the budget.

More information on application policies and requirements is available at "Centers of Excellence Guidance and Application to Receive Federal Financial Assistance" on Treasury's RESTORE Act website, at http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx.

C. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

1. All applicants must have a DUNS number. A DUNS number may be obtained from Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. by telephone (currently 866–705–5711) or the Internet (currently at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform). This number should be entered in the block with the applicant's name and address on the cover page of the application (Item 8c on the Form SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance). The name and address in the application should be exactly as given for the DUNS number. Applicants should obtain this DUNS number immediately to ensure all registration steps are complete prior to submitting an application.

2. All applicants must provide their DUNS and EIN/TIN numbers in order to be able to register in the System for Award Management (SAM); the website for the SAM system is https://www.sam.gov. Registering an account with SAM is a separate process from submitting an application. Applicants are encouraged to register early. All applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application. Applicants must maintain an active registration with SAM at all times, prior to submitting an application and throughout the entire period of performance of an award. Applicants are required to annually renew their registration with the System for Award Management (SAM). Failure to renew a SAM registration prior to application submission may prevent an applicant from being eligible to receive a grant award.

   Some applicants may have already registered with the Central Contracting Registration (CCR) database. SAM has integrated the CCR and 7 other federal procurement systems into a new, streamlined system. If an applicant had an active record in CCR, there will be an active record in SAM. Nothing more is needed unless a change in business circumstances requires updates to the entity record(s) in order for the applicant to be paid, receive an award, or to renew the entity prior to expiration. Please consult the SAM website listed above for additional information.

   Applicants must successfully register with SAM prior to registering in the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) as a prime awardee user. Prime recipients must maintain a current registration with the SAM system, and may make subawards only to entities that have DUNS numbers. Organizations must report executive compensation as part of the registration profile at https://www.sam.gov by the end of the month following the month in which an award is made, and annually thereafter (based on the reporting requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282), as amended by section 6202 of Public Law 110-252 and implemented by 2 C.F.R. Part 170). See Section VI, Award Administration

Information, for more information on FFATA.

3. Treasury cannot make a grant award to an applicant who has not obtained a DUNS number and does not maintain an active registration with SAM. See 2 C.F.R. Part 25.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis as long as funds are available in an applicant's allocation. Applications should be submitted at least 90 days before the requested start date of the award. This funding opportunity announcement will close on July 31, 2015. A new funding opportunity announcement may be posted again in August 2015, as determined necessary by Treasury.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Please check box "C" on item 19 of the SF 424 (Application for Federal Assistance) as Review by State under Executive Order 12372 does not apply.

F. Funding Restrictions

Per OMB guidelines, Treasury will not allow reimbursement of costs incurred before an award is made, unless an applicant demonstrates that the costs were incurred directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the award, and the costs are necessary for the efficient and timely performance of the scope of work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the award and only with Treasury's written approval. All costs incurred before the Federal awarding agency makes the Federal award are at the recipient's risk. Any pre-award costs should be requested as part of an application under this funding opportunity announcement. The applicant must clearly describe the proposed pre-award costs in the scope of work and budget justification, and provide a compelling justification as to why Treasury should approve the pre-award costs.

As noted in the Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for Centers of Excellence on the Treasury website at: http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx, the following costs are unallowable unless approved in writing by Treasury:

a. Construction, including the alteration, repair, or rehabilitation of existing structures. Facilities costs are allowable as indirect costs in a federally approved negotiated indirect cost rate.

b. Acquisition of land or interests in land.

G. Other Submission Requirements

All applications must be submitted via the GrantSolutions.gov system (https://www.grantsolutions.gov/gs).

Documents that require a signature may be scanned and uploaded into the application package. In GrantSolutions.gov, the name of whoever submits the application automatically appears as the signature of the Authorized Representative on the SF-424. While GrantSolutions.gov will allow anyone enrolled in the system to submit an application, Treasury requires that the Authorizing Official submit the application. Contact Treasury using the contact information provided below in the event of technical difficulties.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

This is a noncompetitive grant opportunity. Each application will be evaluated for completeness and conformance to the RESTORE Act and regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 34 and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. Treasury also will evaluate each applicant's ability to successfully administer an award, using information such as the Operational Self-Assessment, audits under the Single Audit Act, and OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information.

B. Review and Selection Process

Treasury will perform an initial eligibility review of applications as they are submitted. Treasury also will assess each application for completeness and conformance to the RESTORE Act and regulation and federal laws and policies on grants. Applications will be selected for funding if they fulfill all application requirements and funding is available in the applicant's Trust Fund allocation.

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Successful applications will be announced and awarded on a rolling basis as they are reviewed, depending on the complexity of the proposed activity. All awards will have a start date of the first day of the month.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Treasury will notify applicants of application determinations via email, either directly from Treasury or via email notifications issued through the GrantSolutions.gov system. Treasury will provide successful applicants with a Notice of Award. Applicants must formally accept the award within 30 days, via the GrantSolutions.gov system, in order for the award to become legally binding. More information regarding the grant award acceptance process via GrantSolutions.gov will be provided to potential Awardees during training.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Awards under this announcement are subject to the RESTORE Act, Treasury regulations at 31 C.F.R. Part 34, and federal laws and regulations concerning grants. The Standard and Program-specific Terms and Conditions for awards under this announcement are posted on Treasury's RESTORE Act website at http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx. Below is a list of requirements with which the applicant will need to comply. This is a non-exhaustive list. Special Award Conditions may be applied to an award under this announcement.

1. Lobbying Restrictions at 31 C.F.R. Part 21.
2. Government-wide Debarment and Suspension Requirements at 31 C.F.R. Part 19.
3. Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace at 31 C.F.R. Part 20.
4. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act and regulations at 2 C.F.R. Part 170.
5. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and any Treasury regulations implementing these requirements.
6. Award Term for Trafficking in Persons at 2 C.F.R. Part 175.

C. Reporting

Applicants who receive awards will be required to file the SF-425 Federal Financial Report. Performance reporting is also required via the SF-PPR and the Status of Performance Report. The Status of Performance Report may be found in the application package. All financial and performance reports must be filed semi-annually via GrantSolutions.gov during the grant award's period of performance, unless a special award condition specifies more frequent reporting. The Operational Self-Assessment form also must be updated annually.

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For questions regarding this announcement, please contact the Office of Gulf Coast Restoration at restoreact@treasury.gov or 202-622-6873.

Information is also available at Treasury's RESTORE Act website at http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx.