Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Tribes and Underserved Communities, Under the BIL and IRA

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Funding Opportunity Title: Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Tribes and Underserved Communities, Under the BIL and IRA

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2023-2008173

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.463, Habitat Conservation

Dates: The application deadline is December 19, 2023 at 11:59 PM Eastern time. Applications must be received by www.Grants.gov.

Funding Opportunity Description: The principal objective of this funding opportunity is to support opportunities for tribes, and/or tribal entities, and underserved communities to meaningfully engage in coastal habitat restoration activities. NOAA anticipates up to $45 million will be available under this opportunity, of which $20 million will specifically be available as direct awards and subawards to Indian tribes (as defined in 25 U.S.C. Section 5304 (e)) and Native American organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements (e.g. tribal commissions, tribal consortia, tribal conservation districts, and tribal cooperatives). The remaining $25 million will be available to all eligible applicants. Funding will prioritize capacity building, science support, and restoration project activities that enhance resilience of tribes, tribal entities, and underserved communities and have the greatest potential to lead to habitat restoration in coastal, estuarine, marine, and Great Lakes areas.

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) (BIL, Public Law 117-58), 135 STAT. 1356 (Nov. 15, 2021) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA, Public Law 117-169). This funding opportunity does not have a formal matching requirement.

Projects that are most responsive to the program priorities will be more competitive. Potential activities include: 1) Capacity building, which may include (but is not limited to) participation in municipal or regional-scale resilience planning, project planning and feasibility studies, stakeholder engagement, proposal development for future funding, and outreach and education, as well as hiring of staff to increase capacity to support the planning, design and implementation of restoration actions, as well as capacity to support overall award management including

tracking, reporting, and project coordination/development; 2) actionable science support, such as the collection and/or analysis of climate, habitat or other community- or conservation-related data that informs planning and decision making and/or future restoration actions of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities; and/or 3) restoration project activities, including for demonstration projects, which may include engineering and design, permitting, on-the-ground restoration, and pre- and post-project implementation monitoring. Competitive applications will directly benefit tribes or underserved communities. Applicants may apply for funding to support one or more of these activities.

This funding opportunity supports NOAA's efforts to enhance coastal resilience. Coastal areas support the nation's largest and often fastest-growing population centers, as well as key natural assets. Strengthening coastal resilience means preparing and adapting coastal communities to mitigate the impacts of and more quickly recover after extreme events such as hurricanes, coastal storms, flooding, and sea level rise. Habitat restoration and natural and nature-based solutions are critical to doing so by: protecting lives and property; sustaining commercial, recreational, and subsistence fishing; recovering threatened and endangered species; and maintaining and fostering vibrant coastal economies and lifestyles. This funding opportunity – along with those for National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund Grants, Climate Resilience Regional Challenge Grants, Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants, Coastal Zone Management, and National Estuarine Research Reserves – aims to fund projects that enhance coastal resilience. This funding opportunity in particular focuses on building organizational capacity and/or supporting restoration activities that benefit tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities and enhance their resilience to climate hazards.

Through this funding opportunity, NOAA offers funding for tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved community applicants to meaningfully engage their communities through outreach and education throughout the project. Meaningful engagement ensures community members are integral to the visioning, decision-making, and leadership for coastal habitat restoration projects that may affect their environment, and/or health and well-being. For applicants demonstrating a connection to tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities, meaningful engagement of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities is intended to ensure that community members are integral to the visioning, decision-making, and leadership for coastal habitat restoration projects; to ensure that the scope of such projects are inclusive of the priorities and needs of communities; and/or to ensure that the benefits of such projects flow back to tribes, tribal entities, or underserved communities.

NOAA is committed to the goals of advancing equity and support for underserved communities. NOAA encourages applicants to include and demonstrate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility through proactive, meaningful, and equitable community engagement

in the identification, design, and/or implementation of proposed projects. NOAA also encourages applicants to appropriately consider and elevate local or Indigenous knowledge in project design, implementation, and evaluation. Guidance on Indigenous Knowledge is available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQ-IK-Guidance.pdf Applicants should identify if the project is located within tribal or underserved communities and/or whether a portion of the resilience benefits from the proposed work will flow to tribal, tribal entities, or underserved communities. This program will advance the Biden-Harris Administration's Justice40 Initiative. Established by Executive Order 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, the Justice40 Initiative set the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments, such as climate, clean energy, and other areas, flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment.

Proposals selected for funding through this opportunity will be funded through cooperative agreements. NOAA encourages a period of performance of up to three years, with the potential for up to five years, if necessary and approved by NOAA. NOAA anticipates typical federal funding for awards will range from $250,000 to $1 million over three years. NOAA will not accept proposals with a total federal funding request of less than $75,000 or more than $3 million for the entire award. Projects requesting the upper limit of funding are expected to implement restoration actions and science support or capacity-building, versus being solely focused on capacity-building and/or science support. Funds will be administered by the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation, as directed by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Tribes, tribal entities, and underserved communities have been systematically denied meaningful opportunities to participate in decision-making affecting their communities and are disproportionately located in areas affected by climate hazards, such as flooding and coastal storms. This combination of factors increases the likelihood that tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities are impacted by and less resilient to such hazards.

The principal objective of this funding opportunity is to support opportunities for tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities to meaningfully engage in coastal habitat restoration activities. NOAA intends to support capacity building; actionable science support, such as the collection and/or analysis of climate, habitat or other community- or conservation-related data; and restoration project activities that enhance resilience of tribal and underserved communities and have the greatest potential to lead to habitat restoration in coastal, estuarine, marine, and Great Lakes areas. At least $20 million of the available funding will go to Indian tribes (as defined in 25 U.S.C. Section 5304 (e) or Native American organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements (e.g., tribal commissions, tribal consortia, tribal conservation districts, and tribal cooperatives) through direct awards or subawards. For all projects, meaningful engagement of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities is intended to ensure that community members are integral to the visioning, decision-making, planning, and/or leadership for coastal habitat restoration projects; to ensure that the scope of such projects are inclusive of the priorities and needs of communities; and/or to ensure that the benefits of such projects flow back to a tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved communities.

Strengthening the resilience of coastal ecosystems and coastal communities is critical in addressing the climate crisis. Ecosystem and community resilience are also essential to fulfilling the NOAA Fisheries mission of promoting the recovery of threatened and endangered species and enhancing the sustainability of subsistence, commercial and recreational fisheries. Improving ecosystem resilience through habitat restoration results in multiple co- benefits to human communities and fish and wildlife species. Increased ecosystem resilience can increase community resilience by alleviating negative effects from extreme weather and climate hazards, which can have significant impacts on human communities. Increased ecosystem resilience also improves the environment’s ability to recover from extreme weather events or climate hazards, while retaining or having the ability to preserve ecosystem structure and ecological function.

This funding opportunity will invest in building organizational capacity, supporting actionable science, and restoration activities that benefit tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities and enhance their resilience to climate hazards. Capacity building may include (but is not limited to) participation in municipal or regional-scale resilience planning, project planning and feasibility studies, stakeholder engagement, proposal development for future funding, and outreach and education.

- Capacity building may also include hiring staff to enhance capacity to support the planning, design, and implementation of restoration actions.
- Actionable science support may include the collection and/or analysis of climate, habitat or other community- or conservation-related data.
- Restoration project activities, including for demonstration projects, may include engineering and design, planning, permitting, on-the-ground restoration, and pre- and post-project implementation monitoring.

Applicants may apply for funding to support one or more of these activities. This funding opportunity is authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) (BIL, Public Law 117-58), 135 STAT. 1356 (Nov. 15, 2021) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA, Public Law 117-169)

Entire segments of our society have been marginalized, underserved, or underrepresented in efforts to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and adapt to weather and climate impacts, despite being at greater risk due to lack of resources, accessibility constraints, and systemic institutional barriers. This includes tribes and Indigenous people, who are disproportionately affected by climate change and face additional institutional barriers in order to adapt to the most severe impacts (Fourth National Climate Assessment). Executive Order 14096 on “Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All” (https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/26/2023-08955/revitalizing-ournations-commitment-to-environmental-justice-for-all) and Executive Order 13985 on “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government” (https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01753/advancing-racialequity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government), emphasize the need for federal agencies to take actions to redress unfair disparities and remove barriers to government programs and services. Executive Order 14096 places even greater urgency on the federal government to “. . . build upon and strengthen its commitment to deliver environmental justice to all communities across America.” This program will advance the Biden-Harris Administration’s Justice40 Initiative. Established by Executive Order 14008 on “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad,” the Justice40 Initiative

sets the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments, such as climate, clean energy, and other areas, flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment.

The following definitions of key terms apply to this funding opportunity.

Tribes. For this funding opportunity, this term refers to Indian tribes (as defined in 25 U.S.C. Section 5304 (e)) and Native American organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements (e.g., tribal commissions, tribal consortia, tribal conservation districts, and tribal cooperatives). 23 U.S.C. Section 5304 (e) states that '(e)"Indian tribe" or "Indian Tribe" means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688) [43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.], which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.'

Tribal Entities. For this funding opportunity, this term refers to any tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community, and any organization that self-identifies as an Indigenous or Native organization.

Underserved communities. Underserved communities are defined in the Executive Order 13985 and in this funding opportunity as populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

Meaningful engagement. This term refers to communities having an opportunity to be an integral part of the visioning, decision-making, and/or leadership for activities that may affect their environment and/or health and well-being. Meaningful engagement relies on the involvement of those potentially affected in a manner that builds trust and addresses barriers to community participation. This ensures that the scope of the activities is inclusive of the priorities and needs of communities, and that the benefits of the activities flow back to the community. Meaningful engagement concepts and examples of activities are described in the NOAA Restoration Center Meaningful Engagement of Tribes and Underserved Communities overview document available at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-05/meaningful-engagement-05-2023.pdf.

Indigenous Knowledge (including Tribal Knowledge and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)): This term refers to the cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief evolving

by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment. NOAA recognizes the importance of Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge for understanding the environment, adapting to environmental change, and mitigating negative environmental impacts.

Community resilience. This term refers to the capacity of a human community to absorb, withstand, respond to, and/or recover rapidly from disturbances linked to extreme weather events and climate hazards. Community resilience can also include the ability to plan and prepare for adverse effects of extreme weather events or climate hazards, and the capacity to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

Ecosystem resilience. This term refers to the capacity of an ecosystem to absorb, withstand, respond to, and/or recover rapidly from disturbances linked to extreme weather events and climate hazards. Resilient ecosystems can resist damage from extreme weather events or climate hazards, while retaining or having the ability to recover their inherent structure and ecological function.

Habitat restoration. This term applies to techniques or strategies that aim to directly improve the quality and function of habitats, for the purpose of supporting the recovery or sustainability of the target species or fisheries and/or improving community and ecosystem resilience. A variety of habitat types are eligible within this funding opportunity, ranging from marine, estuarine, and coastal ecosystems at the land-sea interface (including coastal rivers), to the freshwater coastal ecosystems of the Great Lakes. Example habitats include, but are not limited to: coral reefs; oyster reefs; coastal wetlands and marshes; freshwater or tidal rivers and streams; shoreline and near-shore ecosystems; seagrass beds; kelp forests and rocky reefs; and mangroves. Applicants with proposals focusing exclusively on fish passage techniques that remove in-stream barriers, such as dams or culverts, are encouraged to reach out to agency contacts (see Section VII) to discuss additional funding opportunities that could be applicable to the proposed work.

Co-benefits of restoration. This term refers to the multiple benefits of restoration that extend beyond biologically relevant benefits to fish and wildlife. This may include contributions to ecosystem and community resilience, increases to business opportunities, revitalization of public communities; improvements in access to recreational, subsistence, and/or culturally important fishing opportunities; reductions to safety hazards, and/or reductions in operation or maintenance costs. Co-benefits are often measured through socioeconomic methods.

Nature-based solutions. This term refers to actions that protect, conserve, restore, sustainably

use, and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems. These solutions effectively and adaptively address social, economic, and environmental challenges, while simultaneously providing benefits for human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience, and biodiversity.

Coastal areas. This term refers to geographies within coastal shoreline counties (or parishes) or within coastal watershed counties (or parishes). Coastal shoreline counties are directly adjacent to the open ocean, estuaries, or the Great Lakes. Coastal watershed counties are located along inland rivers and streams with a significant impact on coastal and ocean resources.

B. Program Priorities

Successful proposals will be those that meet the evaluation criteria (Section V.A.) most closely, including those criteria related to the program priorities described here. Applicants should address the following program priorities: 1) Enhancing habitat in support of ecosystem and community resilience and/or 2) Increasing organizational and technical capacity of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities to lead and/or participate in habitat restoration activities, including actionable science support. Applicants may apply for funding to support one or more of these priorities for a range of activities connected to each priority.

Additional resources for Program Priorities are available at:
* https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/funding-and-financial-services/program-priorities-habitat-restoration-grants
* NOAA Restoration Center Meaningful Engagement of Tribes and Underserved Communities overview document available at: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-05/meaningful-engagement-05-2023.pdf.

1) Enhancing habitat in support of ecosystem and community resilience.

ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE. Applicants should describe the project activities and how the benefits from the proposed work will strengthen the resilience within the ecosystem and flow to tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities. Proposals should be as specific as possible in identifying the anticipated benefits to habitats and species (under NOAA jurisdiction) that will result from the proposed activities, why those benefits are of importance to the relevant tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved community, and define the timeframe near-term or long-term in which the benefits are expected to be realized.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE. Applicants should describe how the proposed actions will enhance the ability of the tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved community to plan, prepare for, and recover from adverse effects of extreme weather events or climate hazards (e.g., storms, flooding, erosion), why the actions are of highest priority and/or most threatening to the local tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities, how they will strengthen community resilience, and/or the co-benefits (e.g., economic vitality, increased access to natural resources) that will be provided to the tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved community once the project is completed, see co-benefits Section I.A. This is a Justice40 covered program, and applicants should review Section IV.B. “Project Narrative” for information pertaining to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to assist in identifying disadvantaged communities.

2) Increasing organizational and technical capacity of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities, to lead and/or participate in habitat restoration activities.

Applicants should describe their status as, or connection to a tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved community, how they have (in the past) and will (in the future) meaningfully engage with the tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities in ways that are integral to the vision and execution of all phases of habitat restoration, and how the proposed activities to build capacity of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities to lead and/or participate in habitat restoration activities. The applicant should fully describe the tribe, tribal entity, and/or community’s capacity needs and how their capacity will be increased in the near-term or long-term. Options for increasing capacity may include, but are not limited to: funding paid positions (including contracts) to support the community’s leadership or engagement in the project; contracting for technical expertise to advance the community’s habitat restoration goals; funding actionable science support; funding paid internships, educational opportunities, or partnerships and mentoring to support the community’s engagement in current and/or potential future projects; funding office or meeting space needed to engage the community; etc. In order to help remove barriers for public participation in feedback activities, applicants can include requests for compensation to support tribal and underserved community participation in public feedback activities. Actionable science, such as the collection and/or analysis of climate, habitat or other community or conservation related data, should support the ability of tribes or underserved communities to make planning decisions, develop decision-making tools, and/or inform future restoration actions.

HABITAT RESTORATION. Activities might include, but are not limited to, support for stakeholder participation in municipal or regional-scale resilience planning, project scoping and goal-setting, project planning, project location evaluation and selection, engineering and

design plan review and comment, permitting and feasibility studies, and/or staff to manage multi-faceted habitat restoration project design and construction, and/or pre- or post-restoration monitoring (see Section III.C for details on monitoring). Activities might also include facilitating public feedback on all phases of habitat restoration scoping and implementation through such mechanisms as public meetings, public site visits, etc.

C. Program Authority

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized under the following statutes to provide grants and cooperative agreements for habitat restoration and conservation: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act 16 U.S.C. 661, as implemented by the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, 16 U.S.C. 1891a; and Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1535. The NOAA Administrator is authorized under the following statute to support formal and informal educational activities at all levels: the America COMPETES Act, as amended, 33 U.S.C. 893a. This funding opportunity announcement is authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Public Law 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act (Public Law 117-169).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

NOAA anticipates up to $45 million will be available under this opportunity, of which $20 million will be specifically available to Indian tribes (as defined in 25 U.S.C. Section 5304 (e)) and Native American organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements (e.g. tribal commissions, tribal consortia, tribal conservation districts, and tribal cooperatives), as direct awards or subawards. The remaining $25 million will be available to all eligible applicants (see definitions Section I.A). NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than $75,000 or more than $3 million for the entire award. NOAA anticipates typical federal funding awards will range from $250,000 to $1 million over three years. Projects requesting the upper limit of funding are expected to implement restoration actions in addition to science support or capacity-building, versus being solely focused on capacity-building and/or science support.

Funds will be administered by the Community-based Restoration Program within the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Any funds provided to successful applicants for subsequent-year funding requests will be based on progress towards stated milestones and availability of funding. This determination is at the discretion

of the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation and the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD).

Neither NOAA nor the Department of Commerce are responsible for direct costs of application preparation. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. The number of awards to be made as a result of this funding opportunity will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested, and the merit and ranking of the applications.

B. Project/Award Period

NOAA encourages a period of performance of up to three years, with the potential for up to five years, if necessary. Award periods may be extended, at the discretion of NOAA and based on project needs, up to the extent legally allowable. This is typically a maximum award length of five years.

The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2024.

Both federal and non-federal match pre-award costs, incurred up to 90 days prior to the award start date, may be requested and will be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before NOAA GMD offers a grant is at the applicant's own risk.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as described in 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.1, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, collaboration on the scope of work, providing assistance with technical aspects of the habitat restoration project, review and comment on design plans, and review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.325.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are tribes, applicants that can demonstrate status as a tribal entity, an underserved community (see definitions in Section I.A.), or entities that partner with tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities such as institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, commercial (for profit) organizations, U.S. territories, and state, local,

and Native American and Alaska Native tribal governments. As part of their applications, applicants must demonstrate their status as, or connection to, a tribe, tribal entity, and/or an underserved community. This status or connection will be reviewed by NOAA as part of the initial eligibility review, and through the application merit review process. NOAA will validate the applicant's description against publicly available demographic and economic data.

This opportunity includes $20 million only available to Indian tribes (as defined in 25 U.S.C. Section 5304 (e)) and Native American organizations that represent Indian tribes through formal legal agreements (e.g. tribal commissions, tribal consortia, tribal conservation districts, and tribal cooperatives). Funding to Indian tribes and Native American organizations may be direct awards or subawards. 23 U.S.C. Section 5304 (e) states that '(e)"Indian tribe" or "Indian Tribe" means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688) [43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.], which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.'

Applicants demonstrating a connection to a tribe, tribal entity and/or an underserved community may do this through proposed subawards, contracts, informal collaboration, or other engagement with, or approval of, one or more tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities. The application will be evaluated based on the strength of the partnership with the underserved community or communities. The partner submitting the application is required to provide supporting documentation in the application demonstrating that they have been endorsed by one or more tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities for the specific work proposed. The documentation may be provided in the form of letters of support from one or more tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities for the specific work proposed, and should be attached with other Supplemental Materials.

Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. However, federal agencies or employees may serve as unfunded collaborative project partners. Foreign entities should participate as partners (contractors, sub-recipients, or informal collaborators) of a prime recipient based in the U.S.

Applicants must propose work in coastal, estuarine, marine, or Great Lakes areas (Section I.B), see Section I.A. for a definition of coastal areas. Eligible applicants for Great Lakes projects must propose work within one of the eight U.S. Great Lakes states (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota). Applications that propose projects in the Commonwealth and Territories of the United States, for this

funding opportunity defined as American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, are eligible, but those in the Freely Associated States (the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia) are not eligible to submit an application.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no non-federal matching requirement for this funding. However, NOAA does encourage partnerships among government, community, industry, and academia, which can be represented in letters of support, see Section IV.B for details, and may result in informal leverage for the project. NOAA encourages applicants whose proposed initiatives exceed the budgetary limits for this competition to apply to this competition and also for other, complementary federal funding for separate components of their larger initiatives. In these situations, NOAA will coordinate as necessary with other agencies to assure that funding is not duplicated and that the complementary components will support completion of the larger initiative.

Non-federal match funds may be optionally included within the application to demonstrate stakeholder support for the proposed work. Non-federal match is not included in the evaluation criteria, and therefore not included in scores during the technical review process. Applicants should refer to 2 C.F.R. 200.306 for cost sharing or matching policies. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of match reflected in the award document signed by NOAA's Grants Management Division. The Grants Officer may amend the match amount based on extenuating circumstances. NOAA is under no obligation to amend the matching contributions once the award document is signed by the recipient. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than $75,000 or more than $3 million during the award period.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Paper applications submitted by the deadline must be received by NOAA no later than seven business days following the post-mark due date and time or they will not be accepted. Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt. Applicants should consider the possibility of unforeseen impacts from natural hazards that could affect internet access and use of Grants.gov on or before application due dates. Applicants should be aware that localized

hazardous weather, monthly scheduled Grants.gov weekend maintenance, or other situations that impact the ability to submit application packages may not result in changes to the application deadline. Information regarding electronic submission through Grants.gov and regarding submitting paper applications is contained in Section IV.G.

All applications MUST contain ALL required forms. Failure to submit forms may result in disqualification from this competition. See Section IV.G for more details.

The following information describes INELIGIBLE project proposal types and activities:

1) Proposals that focus solely on marine debris prevention and removal are not eligible. To find out more about funding opportunities related to marine debris, please check those provided by the NOAA Marine Debris Program at https://www.marinedebris.noaa.gov and by the National Sea Grant College Program at https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Funding.

2) Proposals that focus solely on acquisition of real property are not eligible.

3) Proposals that focus solely on beach renourishment for recreational purposes are not eligible.

4) Proposals addressing hard infrastructure only for water quality improvement are not eligible. Ineligible activities include, but are not limited to, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, elimination of combined sewer outfalls, replacement of failing septic systems, and implementation of agricultural animal waste management plans. However, projects that improve water quality through the creation or enhancement of fisheries habitat are eligible, as are projects that increase the amount of streamflow (i.e., storage and forbearance).

5) Activities that are required by a separate local, state, or federal consent decree, court order, statute, or regulation are not eligible. Applicants planning to combine grant or matching funds with mitigation should review the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources; Final Rule at 73 Fed. Reg. 19594 (April 10, 2008). NOAA plans to follow the approach adopted by some other federal agencies on Page 19636 that describes scenarios where mitigation credits may or may not be obtained in association with federal financial incentives.

6) Effectiveness monitoring and research are not eligible project types with the exception of monitoring that contributes to capacity building for actionable science needs of tribes or underserved communities. The NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation values effectiveness monitoring and research, but funds are not included within this funding opportunity to

support monitoring and research-focused projects. Effectiveness monitoring examines how well the project performs, is longer-term than implementation monitoring, and often requires detailed field investigations of multiple physical, biological, and geochemical processes. Implementation monitoring, as discussed in Section IV.B and V.A.2(c), is an eligible activity, as is the tracking of performance measures and metrics. To find out more about effectiveness monitoring and regional contacts with which to discuss ideas, visit https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/monitoring-and-evaluation-restoration-projects

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. Instructions for these forms are available at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html. Information about the recommended format for applications is contained in Section IV.B.

B. Content and Form of Application

A complete, standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted, as described below. Each proposal must include the following federal application forms. The Standard Form (SF)-424 family and form instructions are available in the Grants.gov application package, but may be downloaded from https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html.

1) SF-424: Application for Federal Assistance
2) SF-424A: Budget Information for Non-construction Programs
3) SF-424B: Assurances for Non-construction Programs
4) CD-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying
5) SF-LLL (if applicable): Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

In addition to the federal application forms, NOAA recommends the following components as part of a complete application package. Page limits assume an 11- or 12-point font and 1-inch margins. If possible, components should be organized into a maximum of three (3) PDF files outlined below, with a maximum of 75 combined pages. Per Grants.gov FAQs, please limit all attachments to a total of 200MB to reduce potential for submission errors (https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-faqs.html).

PDF 1. Proposal Summary and Project Narrative (20 page limit)
PDF 2. Budget Narrative (10 page limit)
PDF 3. Supplemental Materials and Project Designs (up to 45 page limit)

Reviewers WILL ONLY EVALUATE the first 75 pages of the submitted materials. The application should follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V.A) to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The information provided below may help to address the evaluation criteria.

PDF 1. PROPOSAL SUMMARY and PROJECT NARRATIVE (20 page limit)

PROPOSAL SUMMARY (2 page limit)
1) Proposal Title

2) Applicant Organization and relationship to tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved community or communities.

3) Tribes, Tribal Entities, and/or Underserved Communities (as defined in Section I. A.). Please describe the tribe(s), tribal entities, and/or community(s) that are included in the proposal and how they have been historically underserved.

4) Location. Include the nearest town or watershed and, when available, include the geographic coordinates of the restoration activities. Describe the relationship of the project location to the tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved community. If multiple sites are proposed, please include a map or description of all sites. Proposals describing capacity building for a tribe or underserved community should describe the area that will be benefitted by the increased capacity.

5) Brief Project Description. Describe the extent to which the proposed work aligns with the stated program objective (Section I.A) and program priorities (Section I.B). The description should outline the expected role of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities, benefits for the tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities, and how ecosystem and community resilience will be strengthened. Describe the proposed work within the context of the local watershed, or other geographically defined boundary, and if the proposed actions are high priority for tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities.

6) Timeline. Provide a timeline of all proposed activities, if applicable include the status of any project designs in progress. This includes all work to be supported with requested

NOAA funds, and any non-federal formal matching contributions or informal leverage.

7) Landowner and Stakeholder Outreach. Describe progress in conducting outreach to land owners, in-stream barrier owners, land managers, and stakeholders, including permitting agencies. Include the status of access agreements necessary to complete the project. THIS ONLY APPLIES TO PROJECTS THAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTING AN ON-THE-GROUND RESTORATION PROJECT.

8) Funding Request. Include the total request for NOAA funds for each year of the project. If other leveraged funds are necessary to complete the project, include the status of the funds (e.g., not applied for, pending, secured) and outline the sources and amounts. If space is limited, provide a summary here and include a full description in the Project Narrative, Budget Narrative, or Supplemental Materials.

Project Narrative (18 page limit).

Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria described in Section V.A. Please review the Evaluation Criteria for a full description of topics to include in the project narrative, and the types of detail reviewers will evaluate your proposal against. The application should follow the organization of the evaluation criteria to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The information provided below may help you address the evaluation criteria.

1) IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSED WORK

(a) Explain how the project’s outcomes will strengthen ecosystem and community resilience (see Section I.A) in the short and long term. Include habitat and species that will benefit, and co-benefits of the restoration activities to be provided. Examples of co-benefits include, but are not limited to: protection from flooding and extreme weather events; reduction in erosion impacts; increases in job opportunities, improvements in access to recreational, subsistence, and cultural fishing opportunities; and creation of public spaces. Proposals should include descriptions of anticipated resilience benefits and other co-benefits that will result from habitat restoration within the spatial and temporal context of the proposed activities. Co-benefits are defined in Section I.A.

(b) Describe the tribe, tribal entity or underserved community targeted by the project. For an underserved community describe how this community qualifies as an underserved community (see the definition in I.A). How will the tribe, tribal entity or underserved community benefit from these capacity building, actionable science support, and/or restoration activities? For an underserved community, include demographic and economic

data as one way to describe how the community qualifies as underserved. As needed, to assist with identifying and assessing the marginalized, underserved and/or underrepresented communities that are connected to their proposed restoration actions, NOAA encourages the use of the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) (at https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5) as the primary mapping tool.

Applicants are encouraged to use the information available through CEJST, other relevant tools and direct engagement of tribes and underserved communities to assist in assessing how the benefits of a project will reverse or mitigate the burdens of disadvantage.

- CEJST is a tool provided by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) that aims to help federal agencies identify disadvantaged communities as part of the Justice40 initiative to accomplish the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits from certain federal investments reach disadvantaged communities. Further, all federally recognized tribes and tribal entities are Justice40 communities, whether or not they have land, in addition to Alaska Native Villages.

- M-23-09, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf

(c) Explain how the project will meaningfully engage (see the definition - meaningful engagement in I.A.) the community (tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved) throughout the project period in ways that are integral to the vision and execution of the phases of habitat restoration activities proposed. When applicable, describe how the activities will increase the organizational capacity of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities to lead and/or participate in habitat restoration activities in the near and long term. Include past activities for context when applicable.

2) TECHNICAL MERIT

(a) Project Detail.

Describe the project’s activities and goals, including a timeline with annual key milestones identified for each activity, clear deliverables, and relevant details about permitting and environmental compliance. Include a description of existing NOAA participation or engagement in related project activities, if applicable, and consider including key times for NOAA collaboration in the project timeline.

For projects that include actionable science such as the collection and/or analysis of climate,

habitat or other community or conservation related data, describe how that information will be collected and used by tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities to inform planning and decision making and/or future restoration actions.

For implementation projects, provide evidence to support the feasibility of the techniques, address whether the methods are technically sound and safe for the public, and the details for proposed actions at each proposed project location.

(b) Outcomes and Performance Measures

Describe the project(s) expected outcomes and their associated performance measures. Applicants should describe the habitat-based metrics or other quantitative performance measures that will be used to evaluate the success of the proposed restoration actions toward achieving the expected project outcomes. Include targets for metrics or measures, as appropriate, that will be used to evaluate success.

(c) Project Monitoring

For projects with an on-the-ground restoration action, describe the habitat-based metrics or other quantitative performance measures that will be used to evaluate the success of the proposed restoration actions. This should include ecological targets that can be evaluated within approximately one-year post-implementation. Proposals that focus solely on pre-implementation activities, such as planning, feasibility, and/or engineering and design, should include baseline monitoring or development of a monitoring plan. Applicants should be willing to work with NOAA to adjust planned monitoring activities, if necessary, to ensure that the proposed parameters are appropriate and meet the requirements below.

Proposals for implementation projects that include one of the NOAA Restoration Center's four primary restoration methods (coral reef restoration; oyster reef restoration; hydrologic restoration; fish passage) should incorporate the applicable implementation monitoring parameters found in the NOAA Restoration Center Implementation Monitoring (Tier 1) Guidance. The monitoring guidance and regional contact persons can be found at: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/monitoring-and-evaluation-restoration-projects

A data sharing plan is not required in the application; however, applicants recommended for funding with projects that will be collecting data will be required to develop a data management plan of up to two pages describing the data requirements in Section IV.B.

3) QUALIFICATIONS
(a) Experience to Implement Scope of Work. Describe the applicant(s) and their background, including the relevant experience and training needed to successfully carry out the project. This may include a hiring plan.

(b) Administrative Qualifications. Describe the administrative resources associated with managing a grant award, include management and reporting requirement details described in 2 CFR 200. This may include a hiring plan.

4) PROJECT COST
(a) Funding Allocation and Cost-effectiveness. Include a rough estimate of estimated costs per task, site, or phase to justify the funding request. This will provide insight into the cost-effectiveness of the proposed activities.

(b) Realistic Estimate of Cost and Budget Breakdown Details. Describe the budget in detail, ensuring it is realistic for the work proposed, and explain how funds will be used to efficiently carry out the project's activities. Include a budget breakdown by year of funds requested. (See Budget Narrative in this section for details).

5) OUTREACH and EDUCATION
(a) Stakeholder Support.
(i) Describe all project stakeholders and how the project has gathered stakeholder, tribe, tribal entity, and/or community support. Ways to document stakeholder support may include but are not limited to descriptions of community support (e.g., prior community work days, letter writing campaigns, news articles, etc.), support letters from partners, or budget narratives including in-kind contributions from the applicant. Contributions may include time, meeting space, materials, money, and/or landowner support, if applicable. All descriptions of stakeholder support should demonstrate community commitment to the project, be critical to the implementation of the proposed project, or show that capacity building will generate momentum beyond the period of the awarded funds.

(b) Community Outreach and Education.
(i) Explain the project's outreach and education strategy to share information and results, including plans for formal and informal education within the tribe, tribal entity, underserved community, and/or broader community.

(ii) Explain other educational opportunities to build awareness of the importance of protecting and recovering habitats, promoting stewardship, and the phases required to conduct restoration. Examples include, but are not limited to, workforce development

initiatives or training opportunities that will build awareness of the phases of restoration required to restore habitat, such as stakeholder workshops, project design and implementation, and/or data collection to enhance understanding by filling a knowledge gap of the local ecosystem defined in an existing tribal or community science plans.

PDF 2. Budget Narrative (10 page limit)

Reviewers will evaluate project costs by reviewing your budget narrative. Your budget narrative should describe project costs in the following categories, also referred to as SF-424A Object Classes: Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, and Other. The sum of funds requested under these Object Classes should be described as Total Direct Costs.

The NOAA Restoration Center has provided guidance and a sample budget at:
* https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants.
* https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-08/Supplemental-Application-Instructions-and-Budget-Guidance.pdf#page=11

The costs required for organizational operation that cannot be easily associated with an individual project or program should be described as Indirect Costs. Organizations with a federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) should include a copy of the approved NICRA in Supplemental Materials (PDF 3). Organizations without a NICRA may claim the 10% de minimis rate for calculating indirect charges on the Modified Total Direct Costs (see 2 C.F.R. 200.1 for definitions). Refer to Sections IV.F. and VI.B. of this announcement for more information about indirect costs. All Object Class costs in the Budget Narrative should equal those entered on the SF-424A. These totals should also be recorded on the SF-424A. NOAA staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, necessary and realistic.

For projects with contractual components, applicants must follow procurement standards set forth in 2 C.F.R. § 200.317-200.327. If the proposal is considered for funding, NOAA Grants Management Division reviewers will be looking for information on the procurement methods used for each contract, as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.320. Applicants are encouraged to provide separate budgets for each contract and they must provide budgets for each contract in excess of $250,000, to determine whether proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable. For contracts that are not yet in place at the time of submitting the proposal, the budget narrative must include an explanation of how contractual

costs were estimated and what procurement methods they will use to select contractors.

Award costs should be divided into annual funding requests for up to three years in duration to show anticipated expenditure rates. If NOAA funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a budget overview for the entire project should be provided to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and is needed for successful project implementation.

NOAA staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, necessary, and realistic. It is helpful to reviewers if you separate costs by milestone or purpose to help them make these determinations.

The NOAA Restoration Center has provided GUIDANCE regarding the level of detail required to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable in the “Supplemental Guidance” at:
* https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/resources-noaa-restoration-center-applicants
* https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-08/Supplemental-Application-Instructions-and-Budget-Guidance.pdf.

If a project has been submitted (or you plan to submit) it for funding consideration elsewhere, applicants should include the funding source, and/or the title of the competition(s), the amount(s) of funds requested or secured from other funding sources, the approximate decision date(s) for anticipated award selection and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal in origin. If space is limited, provide a summary here, and include a full description in the Supplemental materials.

Applicants should clearly indicate if funds are proposed as official, non-federal match, or if the funds are informal leverage. If non-federal matching contributions are proposed, include the status of the funds (e.g., not applied for; pending; secured). If other financial support beyond NOAA federal funds and non-federal match funds will be used to complete the proposed work, outline the sources and amount of these leveraged funds.

Leverage refers to all other funding support that contributes to completion of the project(s). Leverage can be either federal or non-federal in origin, and can include funds expended toward the project(s) either before or during the award period, but is not being proposed as a legally required, non-federal match.

Applicants should refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.306 for explanations of MATCH funds, which

must generally be used during the award period. Match is entered on federal forms, recorded on award documents, and becomes a legally binding component of the award.

PDF 3. Supplemental Materials (45 page limit)

All supplemental attachments are optional, but are recommended to contribute to reviewers' understanding of the work proposed, and therefore may enhance the proposal's merit review score. All documents should be combined into a SINGLE PDF, including a cover page that lists the documents and associated page numbers. The cover page does not count toward the 45 page limit. If provided, this should be uploaded under the "Other Attachments Form" in Grants.gov.

Applicants may:

1) Include a map or aerial photo with nearby towns and/or roads labeled and with the site location(s) highlighted.

2) Include resumes or descriptions of past project management experience for up to five (5) key personnel (approximately 5 pages), including examples of similar scale projects as applicable.

3) Include letters of support as described under III.A Eligible Applicants and V.A Evaluation Criteria for Outreach and Education. If applicable, include a letter documenting support or permission from any private owners or public land managers to conduct work at the proposed site(s). Letters of support should demonstrate consultation with invasive species management programs, as relevant to the project site.

4) Include any other relevant supporting materials, such as federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA), documentation of confirmed sources of formal, non-federal matching contributions or informal leveraged funds; site photos, project designs, etc.

5) If applicable and available, project designs and basis of design reports should be included in the application in order for reviewers to comprehensively assess the technical merit of the proposed restoration. Relevant sections of construction specifications, scopes of work for services, and cost estimates may also be provided. Please DO NOT ATTACH FEASIBILITY STUDIES or watershed plans. The CRITICAL COMPONENTS of those documents should be summarized IN THE PROJECT NARRATIVE. Please remember that reviewers will only evaluate a maximum of 75 pages for each application package.

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

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at www.sam.gov.

Each applicant (unless the applicant has an exception approved by the federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier 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.

Applicants should allow a minimum of two weeks to complete the SAM registration; registration is required only once but must be periodically renewed.

D. Submission Dates and Times

The application deadline is December 19, 2023 at 11:59 PM Eastern time. See Section III.C. and IV.G. for more information.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by state and local governments are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of Executive Order 12372. To find out about and comply with a state's process under Executive Order 12372, contact the official listed in Section VII of this announcement for referral information. Applications submitted by tribes are not subject to Executive Order 12372.

F. Funding Restrictions

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the

applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.1, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance). A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application.

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), an applicant that does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through their cognizant agency for indirect costs as defined under 2 C.F.R. § 200.1. The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Raishan Adams, Grants Officer, NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or raishan.adams@noaa.gov.

G. Other Submission Requirements

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

Applications must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications may not be considered for funding. We highly recommend that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov, as registration with SAM is required (Section IV.C), and several steps are required to verify the staff allowed to submit applications in Grants.gov.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second validates that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third confirms that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing).

If ALL notifications are not received, applicants should contact the Grants.gov help desk to

confirm the application was successfully submitted.

After submitting the application package, applicants should download a copy of the submitted application for offline record-keeping and to verify the contents of the submission zip file. Grants.gov recommends downloading the submitted application via the Details tab of the workspace and verifying the contents of each file in the zip (https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-faqs.html).

Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt for paper applications. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received later than seven business days following the closing date will not be accepted.

All applications MUST contain ALL required forms. Failure to submit forms may result in disqualification from this competition. Applicants are responsible for tracking their own applications. Proposal application packages, including all letters of collaboration or support, shall be SUBMITTED TOGETHER IN ONE PACKAGE.

Electronic applications are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED; however, paper applications will also be considered.

Please notify the contact official in Section VII of this announcement by email if you are experiencing difficulties with Grants.gov, your organization is not able to use Grants.gov, or if you are submitting a paper submission by mail.
Paper applications should be sent to: NOAA Restoration Center, NOAA Fisheries (F/HC3),1315 East West Highway, Rm. 14726, Silver Spring, MD 20910. ATTN: Julia Royster, Competition Manager FY23 Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Tribes and Underserved Communities. All applications MUST contain ALL required forms. Failure to submit forms may result in disqualification from this competition. Applicants are responsible for tracking their own applications.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the following five evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit

connections to the evaluation criteria in their applications. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1) Importance and Applicability of Proposal (40 points): This criterion ascertains the extent to which there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, tribal, state, or local activities. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on alignment with Program Priorities (Section I.B).

(a) Strengthening Ecosystem Resilience (15 points). Does the applicant propose capacity building and/or restoration activities that strengthen ecosystem resilience and that provide ecological benefits that flow to tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities? Does the proposal identify the anticipated benefits to habitats and species that will result from the proposed activities in the near-term and/or long-term?

(b) Enhancing Community Resilience (10 points). Does the applicant propose activities that strengthen community resilience and describe how the benefits of those activities are of importance to the relevant tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved community? Does the proposal describe how the proposed work will enhance the ability to plan, prepare for, and recover from adverse effects of extreme weather events or climate hazards or provide additional co-benefits to the community?

(c) Meaningful Engagement and Capacity Building (15 points). Does the applicant demonstrate their status as, or connection to a tribe, tribal entity, and/or an underserved community? Does the applicant describe the approach to provide for meaningful engagement of tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities, including past activities and future plans to engage the community in ways that are integral to the vision and execution of all phases of the habitat restoration project activities? When applicable, does the proposal increase the organizational and technical capacity of tribes or underserved communities to lead and/or participate in habitat restoration activities in the near term and/or long term? This could include the collection and/or analysis of climate, habitat or other community- or conservation-related data leading to decision-making or decision-making tools.

2) Technical/Scientific Merit (20 points): This criterion assesses whether the proposed activities are technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear goals and objectives. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant has described a realistic and thorough plan that includes:

(a) Project Detail (10 points). To what extent does the proposal completely describe the

proposed restoration goals and actions, and/or related capacity building or science support, including a well-conceived approach for achieving the anticipated results, a realistic timeline, key milestones to be achieved, and the status of relevant permitting and environmental compliance, and as applicable data collection to support tribal or community defined science needs?

(b) Outcomes and Measuring Progress (6 points). To what extent does the proposal identify expected outcomes? To what extent does the proposal describe an effective plan for tracking and measuring the applicant's progress toward achieving the expected outcomes?

(c) Project Monitoring (4 points). If on-the-ground restoration is proposed, to what extent does the proposed work measure near-term implementation success following the restoration monitoring and assessment guidance?

* For proposals that solely include pre-implementation activities and/or capacity building, is developing a monitoring plan for future implementation included in the proposal?

* If no pre- or post-restoration implementation monitoring will be developed or performed, or the proposal is solely to collect data for actionable science, the applicant should explain the rationale for the lack of monitoring to receive full points for this criterion.

3) Overall Qualification of Applicant (10 points): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant and their project management team possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to support the proposed work. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following (as demonstrated by attached resumes, or descriptions of the applicant or key partner and staff's past experience):

(a) Experience to Implement Scope of Work (5 points). Does the applicant/project team possess, or propose hiring, the necessary experience and training to successfully carry out the scale and scope of the work? Does the applicant describe the past successes they are building on that will lead to successful implementation of the proposed project, or the experience and training required for proposed new positions? Proposals will receive equal weight if resources are in place, or if the proposal provides adequate information to ensure the resources will be put in place if award funding is received.

(b) Administrative Qualifications (5 points). Does the applicant/project team possess, or propose hiring, the necessary administrative resources to successfully fulfill the responsibilities associated with managing a grant award, including managing the requested amount of funds and fulfilling management and reporting requirements described in 2 CFR

200? Proposals will receive equal weight if administrative resources are in place or if the proposal provides adequate information to ensure the resources will be put in place if award funding is received.

4) Project Costs (15 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project(s) needs and time-frame. For this competition, applications will be evaluated on the following:

(a) Funding Allocation and Cost-effectiveness (10 points). Does the budget allocate the majority of direct costs within the federal funding request to support capacity building, including actionable science support, such as the collection and/or analysis of climate, habitat or other community- or conservation-related data; and/or restoration projects within the community (tribe, tribal entity, and/or underserved) to build support for currently planned or eventual habitat restoration actions (e.g., project planning, feasibility, engineering and design)? If funds are requested for capacity-building, does the applicant demonstrate how these efforts will support current or future restoration activities?

(b) Realistic Understanding of Cost and Budget Breakdown Details (5 points). Has the applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of costs by providing a budget (broken down by SF-424A object classes) that provides sufficient detail for each major activity or corresponding milestones, and clearly states the NOAA funding request per year requested? If funds are requested for a project with multiple sites or phases, the proposal should include a rough breakdown of estimated costs per task to justify the funding request.

5) Outreach and Education (15 points): NOAA assesses whether the project is based on broad community support and the award can deliver a focused and effective outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Stakeholder Support (7 points). Does the proposal describe all project stakeholders and how the project has gathered stakeholder, tribal, and/or community support critical to the implementation of the project? Letters of support or other documentation demonstrating contributions of time, meeting space, materials, funding, etc., demonstrate the community commitment to the project and enhance its chances of success. As required in Section III.A., entities that submit proposals on behalf of a tribe, tribal entity, or underserved community are required to provide supporting documentation showing the community endorses the specific work proposed.

(b) Community Outreach and Education (8 points). Does the proposal include an outreach

strategy to share information in an easily accessible way about restoration goals and results to a broad audience of tribal and/or underserved community members? Does the proposal include other opportunities such as training opportunities and conservation experiences that build awareness of the importance of protecting and recovering habitats and promoting stewardship, and/or the multiple phases of restoration actions required to recover habitat, such as stakeholder workshops, project design and implementation, and/or data collection to enhance understanding the local ecosystem, or support project design? How strong is the potential to encourage future habitat restoration and conservation actions?

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will undergo an initial administrative screening to determine if they are eligible 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 are screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date, that the applicant is eligible to apply, and that the application includes a project narrative, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. NOAA is not required to screen applications before the submission deadline, 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 before the deadline, the applicant may correct any deficiencies by submitting a revised application. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it.

Eligible applications will undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process to determine how well they meet the program priorities and evaluation criteria of this funding opportunity and the mission and goals of NOAA. Eligible applications will be evaluated by three or more merit reviewers as part of a technical review based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A.

After the technical review, a panel may convene to make final recommendations to the Selecting Official regarding which proposals best meet the program objectives and priorities (Sections I.A and I.B). The panel will be composed of qualified persons with appropriate subject-matter expertise who may be from federal, state, or tribal agencies, academic institutions, for profit or non-profit organizations. To the extent non-federal panelists are involved, the panel will not provide consensus advice. The panel may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference, or other electronic means to discuss applications.

If convened, the panel will be presented with the top-ranked applications, per the results of the technical review. Panelists will also receive the technical review scores and comments for each application. The panel, or the individual panelists, will rate all top-ranked proposals

on the following scale:

1 – Fair: application marginally addresses program priorities outlined in Section I.A and I.B and was moderately responsive to Evaluation Criteria.

2 – Good: application adequately addresses program priorities outlined in Section I.A and I.B and was strongly responsive to Evaluation Criteria.

3 – Excellent: application exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A and I.B, and was highly responsive to Evaluation Criteria.

If a panel is held, the panel's ranked list will be the ranking considered by the Selecting Official for recommending applications for funding. If a panel is not held, the technical review ranking will be the ranking considered by the Selecting Official for recommending applications for funding.

If an application is recommended for funding, staff from the NOAA Restoration Center will contact the applicant to negotiate a final application package. 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, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. If additional funding subsequently becomes available, additional applications may be selected without further competition. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award.

NOAA may choose to award partial funding as part of a multi-year award. Once funds are awarded, recipients of multi-year awards will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years for the same award. NOAA expects, but is not obligated, to provide additional funding to multi-year awards in subsequent years. In this case, a budget narrative and SF-424A that identifies each separate year of requested funding will be required prior to an award offer. Adding funds to multi-year awards is contingent on the availability of funds and satisfactory performance, and is at the sole discretion of NOAA.

The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Management Division, and NOAA program staff. The NOAA Grants Officer makes the final approval decision and issues an award, as described in Section VI.A. and B.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official will recommend applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order, based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

1) Availability of funding;

2) Program priorities and policy factors set out in Sections I.A and I.B;

3) Balance/distribution of funds by: a) geographic area, b) type of institutions, c) type of applicants, d) research areas, or e) project types;

4) Whether the proposal duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;

5) Applicant's prior award performance;

6) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups, including tribes, tribal entities, and/or underserved communities; and

7) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation (Section VI.B) before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Applicants should anticipate the earliest start date for awards will be October 1, 2024. An announcement of awards that are recommended for funding will likely occur prior to the award start dates.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities including monitoring, the award duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each award will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA GMD, and NOAA staff that will administer these restoration awards. The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer through NOAA's electronic grants management system. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

1) PRE-AWARD COSTS. Per 2 CFR 200.458, NOAA authorizes award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date at the applicant's own risk without approval from NOAA and in accordance with the applicant's internal policies and procedures. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the federal award. This does not include direct proposal costs (as defined at 2 CFR 200.460). NOAA or the Department of Commerce are not responsible for direct proposal preparation costs. Pre-award costs will be a portion of, not in addition to, the approved total budget of the award. Pre-award costs expended more than 90 days prior to the period of performance start date require approval from the Grants Officer. This does not change the period of performance start date.

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

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

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

RESEARCH TERMS AND CONDITIONS. For awards designated on the CD-450 as

Research, the Commerce Terms, and the Federal-wide Research Terms and Conditions (Research Terms) as implemented by the Department of Commerce, currently, at https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp, both apply to the award. The Commerce Terms and the Research Terms are generally intended to harmonize with each other; however, where the Commerce Terms and the Research Terms differ in a Research award, the Research Terms prevail, unless otherwise indicated in a specific award condition.

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

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

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

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH. For research projects involving Human Subjects an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or an exemption determination will be required in accordance with DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions Section G.05.i "Research Involving Human Subjects" found at https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA). NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding

opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500_1508.pdf.

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases, if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment. See also Section IV.B. of this announcement.

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

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS. The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and

Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

DATA SHARING PLAN.

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

2. Applicants recommended for funding may be asked to provide a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by NOAA in the Announcement. The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review.

- A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance.

Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets.

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

4. Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with NOAA funding will be required to be

submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by NOAA one year after publication by the journal.

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

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

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

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

SCIENCE INTEGRITY.
1. Maintaining Integrity. The non-federal entity shall maintain the scientific integrity of research performed pursuant to this grant or financial assistance award including the prevention, detection, and remediation of any allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, and the conduct of inquiries, investigations, and adjudications of allegations of violations of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. All the requirements of this provision flow down to subrecipients.

2. Peer Review. The peer review of the results of scientific activities under a NOAA grant, financial assistance award or cooperative agreement shall be accomplished to ensure consistency with NOAA standards on quality, relevance, scientific integrity, reproducibility, transparency, and performance. NOAA will ensure that peer review of "influential scientific information" or "highly influential scientific assessments" is conducted in accordance with

the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review and NOAA policies on peer review, such as the Information Quality Guidelines.

3. In performing or presenting the results of scientific activities under the NOAA grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement and in responding to allegations regarding the violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct, the non-federal entity and all subrecipients shall comply with the provisions herein and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 202-735D, Scientific Integrity, and its Procedural Handbook, including any amendments thereto. That Order can be found at: https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-202-735d-2-scientific-integrity#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20this%20National,inform%20management%20and%20policy%20decisions.

4. Primary Responsibility. The non-federal entity shall have the primary responsibility to prevent, detect, and investigate allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct. Unless otherwise instructed by the grants officer, the non-federal entity shall promptly conduct an initial inquiry into any allegation of such misconduct and may rely on its internal policies and procedures, as appropriate, to do so.

5. By executing this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement the non-federal entity provides its assurance that it has established an administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigating, and reporting allegations of a violation of scientific integrity or scientific and research misconduct; and that it will comply with its own administrative process for performing an inquiry, investigation, and reporting of such misconduct.

6. The non-federal entity shall insert this provision in all subawards at all tiers under this grant, financial assistance award, or cooperative agreement.

REVIEW OF RISK. After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant’s management systems, history of performance, and the applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the System for Award Management (Responsibility/Qualification) (formerly Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

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

REQUIRED USE OF AMERICAN IRON, STEEL, MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS. If applicable, and pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub.L. No. 117-58, which includes the Build American, Buy American (BABA) Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52 and OMB M-22-11, recipients of an award of federal financial assistance from the Department of Commerce (DOC) are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless: 1) all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States–this means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States; 2) all manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States—this means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States; and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation; and 3) all construction materials are manufactured in the United States—this means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at

or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

-- (1) Excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives. 2 IIJA, § 70917(c)(1).

To help federal agencies and recipients meet BABA requirements, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) National Network™ provides a service to connect stakeholders, including recipients, to U.S. manufacturers that have relevant production capabilities and capacities to help fulfill current market and supply chain needs. Recipients considering a BABA nonavailability waiver are strongly encouraged to contact the NIST/MEP for assistance with supplier scouting services prior to seeking a BABA nonavailability waiver. Further information on the NIST/MEP supplier scouting services is available at: https://www.nist.gov/mep/supplier-scouting.

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

DEFINITIONS. “Construction materials” includes an article, material, or supply—other than an item of primarily iron or steel; a manufactured product; cement and cementitious materials; aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel; or aggregate binding agents or additives —that is or consists primarily of: non-ferrous metals; plastic and polymer-based products

(including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); glass (including optic glass); lumber; or drywall. “Domestic content procurement preference’’ means all iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States; the manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States; or the construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States. “Infrastructure” includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States, roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy. ‘‘Project’’ means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States.

SIGNAGE. The DOC encourages the use of public signage on projects funded in whole or in part by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)), the CHIPS and Science Act (CHIPS), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the American Rescue Plan (ARP), and other federally-funded projects as appropriate. Clear and prominent construction signage on projects is one of several ways to inform taxpayers about how federal funds from these laws are being spent and advance the goals of accountability and transparency. Construction signs should be displayed throughout the construction phase of the project in an easily visible location that can be directly linked to the work taking place and be maintained in good condition throughout the construction period. Award-specific conditions for construction signage may require the use of the official Investing in America emblem, and refer to the general guidelines and design specifications for applying the emblem and corresponding logomark available in the Official Investing in America Emblem Style Guide: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Investing-in-America-Brand-Guide.pdf. If the project is installing a plaque citing the origins or history of the project, the plaque should identify the project as a “project funded by [Insert name of the law].” Costs associated with signage must be reasonable and limited, and recipients are encouraged to use recycled or recovered materials when procuring signs. Signs should not be produced or displayed if doing so results in unreasonable cost, expense, or recipient burden.

C. Reporting

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.328-9 and the terms and conditions of the award, financial reports are to be submitted semiannually. Performance (technical) reports shall use the NOAA Restoration Center's progress report narrative format and form approved by OMB under control number 0648 0718, or a successor form. This form will be provided to

awardees by the NOAA Federal Program Officer. In addition, award recipients proposing multiple site locations may be required to complete individual reports for each site, or provide a project/site list including status and expenditures.

Performance (technical) progress reports shall be due on the same fiscal year schedule as financial reports (October 30 and April 30) covering April 1 - September 30 and October 1 - March 31, respectively. A comprehensive final report covering all activities during the award period is required and must be received by NOAA within 120 days after the end date of this award. Reports are submitted electronically through NOAA's electronic grants management system.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 U.S.C. 6101 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards of $30,000 and over.

If selected for funding, award recipients will be expected to use North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes to characterize project expenses. Applicants will also report the number of jobs created or retained, and for what duration, in labor hours. NOAA will use this information to analyze the effects of habitat restoration spending on employment and economic output. Applicants selected for funding will receive further guidance on using NAICS codes to record project expenses and labor hours.

Recipients will be obligated to assist NOAA in complying with all relevant requirements and implementing guidance issued to federal agencies by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), particularly with respect to any requirements related to the BIL and IRA that may be determined at a later time. NOAA anticipates additional guidance may be forthcoming related to responsibilities of recipients of grants and cooperative agreements, including guidance on agency-wide or government-wide requirements.

VII. Agency Contacts

Supplemental Guidance regarding application writing and FAQs about this Announcement can be found at www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/coastal-habitat-restoration-and-resilience-grants-tribes-and-underserved-communities.

For further information, contact Julia Royster at (301) 427-8686, or by e-mail at

underserved.community.grants@noaa.gov.

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NOAA Restoration Center staff before submitting an application to discuss their NOAA project ideas with respect to technical merit and NOAA's objectives. NOAA will make every effort to respond to prospective applicants on a first come, first served basis. These discussions will not include review of draft proposals or site visits during the application period.

VIII. Other Information

No further information.