

Building Capacity for Environmental Literacy

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Office of the Under Secretary (USEC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Building Capacity for Environmental Literacy

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-SEC-OED-2018-2005481

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.008, NOAA Mission-Related Education Awards

Dates: The deadline for applications is 11:59 pm EDT on April 9, 2018. Note that NOAA's Office of Education staff will only be available to answer questions until 5 PM EDT.

Applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov; no hard copy or email applications will be accepted. Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system and with SAM.gov prior to submitting an application. These registration processes can take several weeks and involve multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as they decide they intend to apply, even if they are not yet ready to submit their applications. Applications submitted through Grants.gov are automatically date/time stamped when they are validated and submitted to the agency. PLEASE NOTE: When submitting through Grants.gov, you will receive 3 emails. An initial email will be sent to confirm your attempt to submit an application. This is NOT a confirmation of acceptance of your application. It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your application visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is to build capacity for environmental literacy in support of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) mission goals through a cooperative agreement with a non-profit organization. In order to further the efforts of the external community that supports NOAA's environmental literacy-related priorities, NOAA is seeking a partnership with a nonprofit organization with a mission of environmental education and/or conservation to work with NOAA to implement formal and informal education efforts, outreach, and professional development in support of environmental literacy. The successful applicant will be supported through a 5-year

cooperative agreement with NOAA and should have significant experience supporting environmental literacy, as well as capacity to convene meetings and workshops, manage small-scale grants, and support program evaluation. Experience facilitating partnerships, developing education and outreach materials, and implementing educator professional development is also preferred.

Specific activities will be determined collaboratively with NOAA and will further the efforts of the external community to build environmental literacy through informal and formal education. Projects will support NOAA's mission in the areas of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and climate sciences and stewardship as defined by the goals of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan 2015-2035 (<http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/noaa-education-council/strategic-planning-evaluation>). NOAA's education website (<http://www.noaa.gov/education>) provides more information about NOAA education activities and existing partnerships. Projects must be implemented within the United States and its territories.

Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations. For-profit organizations, individuals, state, local and Indian tribal governments in the United States, foreign institutions, foreign organizations and foreign government agencies, and institutions of higher education are not eligible to apply, but may be project partners. Federal agencies are not eligible to receive federal assistance under this announcement, but may be non-funded project partners.

NOAA anticipates the availability of approximately \$200,000 to \$1,000,000 for each year over the five year period of FY 2018 to FY 2023 for this award, not to exceed a total award of \$5,000,000 for all years. NOAA anticipates making one award in the form of a multi-year cooperative agreement in FY 2018 by July 31, 2018 with a start date no earlier than August 1, 2018. Note: Links to helpful information for applying to this opportunity are available at www.noaa.gov/office-education/2018-coop.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

1. Overview

The purpose of this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) is to build capacity for environmental literacy in support of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) mission goals through a cooperative agreement with a non-profit organization. The NOAA mission is: “to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts, to share that knowledge and information with others, and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.” Education plays a significant role in supporting NOAA’s mission. The NOAA Office of Education coordinates activities across NOAA and with external partners to help ensure that NOAA’s education programs and activities are based on NOAA science and support the agency’s cross-cutting priority of promoting environmental literacy. In order to further the efforts of the external community that supports NOAA’s environmental literacy-related priorities, NOAA is seeking a partnership with a nonprofit organization with a mission of environmental education and/or conservation to work with NOAA to implement formal and informal education efforts, outreach, and professional development in support of environmental literacy.

2. Description of Project Activities

The successful applicant should have significant experience supporting environmental literacy within formal K-12 and informal education in the United States, as well as capacity to convene meetings and workshops, manage mini-grants, and support program evaluation. Experience facilitating partnerships, developing education and outreach materials, and implementing educator professional development is also preferred.

Activities will support NOAA’s mission in the areas of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and climate sciences and stewardship as defined by the goals of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan 2015-2035 (<http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/noaa-education-council/strategic-planning-evaluation>). NOAA’s education website (<http://www.noaa.gov/education>) provides more information about NOAA education activities and existing partnerships. Project activities must be implemented within the United States and its territories.

Activities include (but are not limited to) the following categories (listed in order of the relative level of effort NOAA anticipates the successful applicant devoting to each). Note: more specific activities will be determined collaboratively with NOAA and will further the

efforts of the external community to build environmental literacy through informal and formal education.

A. Facilitating partnerships with and between external networks

The successful applicant will identify stakeholders with complementary environmental and scientific literacy missions in order to facilitate partnerships and help build networks. To accomplish this, the successful applicant will support, co-host, and/or facilitate conferences, workshops and/or events that build environmental literacy among external NOAA partners. These activities may include a range of involvement such as sponsoring professional society conferences to co-hosting workshops for networks, such as the Science On a Sphere (SOS) Collaborative Users, the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELC), or other NOAA partners to address issues of common interest/needs of those communities. Applicants should provide examples of past success in planning such events and convening groups and show how they have facilitated strategic partnerships and engaged stakeholders in support of common goals.

B. Evaluation of NOAA-supported programs

The intent behind this activity is to support the evaluation of NOAA-supported external programs for the purpose of educating NOAA partners, as well as informing members of the broader science education and/or environmental education communities on lessons learned and best practices related to their fields. For example, an applicant could identify a consultant to analyze data collected through the NOAA B-WET program national evaluation system in order to produce a summary of best practices and recommendations to share with the environmental education community. The applicant would describe how they would implement program evaluation, including how they would identify and acquire the appropriate tools, technologies and partners to conduct data collection, perform analysis, and disseminate results for independent program evaluations.

C. Managing and supporting STEM-focused competitions, such as science fairs and grants

The successful applicant will support competitions that facilitate science and environmental literacy, including but not limited to, science fairs, art competitions, and small-scale grant awards (awards under \$100k). This activity may include working collaboratively with the NOAA Office of Education and the U.S. Department of Education to support integration of NOAA resources into the activities of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (contingent on receipt of funds from the U.S. Department of Education.) Applicants should document experience developing and distributing an announcement of funding, accepting and reviewing applications, organizing expert reviewers, selecting and notifying awardees, and monitoring grantee work through periodic

reports and in-person site visits when appropriate. Applicants should also demonstrate the ability to support student-based art and/or science competitions.

D. Developing education and outreach materials

Under this activity the selected organization will work with NOAA to design, develop, and disseminate educational materials (digital, printed, or for conference exhibit displays) that highlight NOAA's education mission. Materials to be shared on the NOAA website need to be compatible with NOAA and other federal requirements, such as section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794 (d)). An example of this activity is the development of modules for NOAA's Data in the Classroom website. To be successful at this activity applicants should describe how they would design and develop educational materials that advance NOAA's education mission and integrate NOAA assets for digital, print, or exhibit displays, and enable the dissemination of those materials to appropriate and targeted audiences.

E. Developing professional development opportunities for educators

The successful applicant will collaborate with appropriate partners to support professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers, informal educators, and other educational providers. For example, under this activity the successful applicant may recruit and identify educational experts to lead in-person professional development workshops or online courses. Applicants should provide examples of professional development they have provided or supported for educators including recruiting participants, implementing, and evaluating these opportunities.

3. Target Audiences

The target audiences for activities supported through this funding opportunity are: the broader public, K-12 students, informal educators (including interpreters and docents) and formal K-12 educators (pre- or in-service, including school administrators), and other education professionals.

4. Awards Dates and Mission Goal

NOAA anticipates that awards funded under this announcement during this fiscal year will be made by July 31, 2018 and that the projects funded under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than August 1, 2018. Note: Links to helpful information for applying to this announcement is available at www.noaa.gov/office-education/2018-coop.

This FFO meets NOAA's four Mission Goals: Climate Adaptation and Mitigation, Weather-Ready Nation, Healthy Oceans, and Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies (<http://www.performance.noaa.gov/goals/>).

5. References

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2015). Education Strategic Plan 2015-2035. URL: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/leadership/edcouncil/education_plan.html

B. Program Priorities

Refer to I.A., Program Objective. There are no other program priorities.

C. Program Authority

Authority for this program is provided by the following: 33 USC §893a, the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Reauthorization Act of 2010 ("America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010"); and 15 USC §1540.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

NOAA anticipates making one award in the form of a multi-year cooperative agreement in FY 2018. NOAA anticipates the availability of approximately \$200,000 to \$1,000,000 for each year over the five year period of FY 2018 to FY 2023 for this award, not to exceed a total award of \$5,000,000 for all years.

Only applications that are 5 years in duration will be considered for funding, and NOAA will not accept applications requesting a total of less than \$1,000,000 or more than \$5,000,000 in federal funds.

The amount of funding available through this announcement will be dependent upon final budgetary decisions for FY 2018 through FY 2023. Publication of this notice does not obligate DOC/NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If an applicant incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement from an authorized NOAA Grants Officer, the applicant does so solely at his/her own risk of such costs not being included under the award. Pre-award costs may be allowed under the award contingent on approval by the NOAA Grants Officer in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.308(d) and 200.458. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA.

Funding for this award will be made on a multi-year basis. Multi-year funding is where funding for the subsequent year(s) is anticipated but not provided at the time the initial

award is approved and where the estimated budget for future funding periods can be forecast with some degree of reliability. NOAA reserves the right to renegotiate the budget and scope of activities on an annual basis.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications must cover a project period of five years to be eligible for merit review. NOAA anticipates that awards funded under this announcement during this fiscal year will be made by July 31, 2018 and that the projects funded under this announcement will have a start date no earlier than August 1, 2018. The successful applicant may be asked to modify the project start date.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The application selected for funding will be funded through a cooperative agreement, as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.24, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the award. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to:

- Assisting with identifying appropriate partners
- Providing educational expertise as necessary
- Participating in the design, implementation, and evaluation of virtual and in-person workshops in support of networks
- Providing input on the selection of independent evaluators and evaluation technologies and approaches
- Assisting in the analysis of data collected through evaluations
- Providing input on peer review panel members and review of grant applicants
- Distributing educational products at appropriate professional venues and on NOAA websites
- Identification of NOAA assets and content
- Providing access to data from needs assessment surveys conducted by NOAA
- Providing resources and education products for professional development workshops.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations. For-profit organizations, individuals, state, local and Indian tribal governments in the United States, foreign institutions, foreign organizations and foreign government agencies, and institutions of higher education are not eligible to apply, but may be project partners. Federal agencies are not eligible to receive federal assistance under this announcement, but may be non-funded project partners.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no cost share requirement.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages, including required federal forms, are available through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks and involves multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, applicants should register as soon as they decide they intend to apply, even if they are not yet ready to submit their applications. Also, even if an applicant has registered with Grants.gov previously, the applicant's password may have expired or their System for Award Management (SAM) registration (formerly Central Contractor Registration [CCR]) may need to be renewed or updated prior to submitting to Grants.gov. (Note that your CCR username will not work in SAM; you must create a new SAM User Account to renew or update your registration.) Grants.gov will not accept submissions if the applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Authorizations and credential corrections can take several days to establish. Please plan accordingly to avoid problems with the submission process. For further information please visit the SAM web portal (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

Each applicant must be registered in Grants.gov. If any applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, uploading the application into the Grants.gov system, or using the Grants.gov Workspace feature, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Instructions for these forms are available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions.html>.

PLEASE NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your application visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

B. Content and Form of Application

Each applicant must submit an application through Grants.gov. Failure of an applicant to

submit an application before the deadline will result in the project not being merit reviewed or receiving any additional consideration. This announcement is not seeking applications that generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the application. See the Office of Education's frequently asked questions site: <http://www.noaa.gov/environmental-literacy-grants-faq> for additional guidance during the preparation of applications.

1. Format Requirements

The page margin on standard letter-size paper should be one inch (2.5 cm) at the top, bottom, left, and right. All pages should be numbered. The typeface should be standard 11-point size or larger and must be clear and easily legible. Color or high-resolution graphics, unusually sized materials, or otherwise unusual materials submitted as part of the application are allowed, but should be employed only when necessary for adequate description of the proposed project. All narrative sections of the application should be single spaced and consist of the elements described in Section IV.B.2. Do not submit scanned documents or forms.

2. Content Requirements

An application must include all elements (a) through (h) below. Failure to provide this information in the required form and within prescribed page limits will result in the application being excluded from further review. Any non-requested elements submitted as part of an application package will be removed from the application prior to merit review.

Applications, which are submitted through the www.Grants.gov website, should include a maximum of four files (PDF files only) in addition to the federal application forms: 1) Title page; 2) Project narrative (not to exceed 15 pages total); 3) Budget table, budget narrative (including sub-award details), and the negotiated IDC rate agreement, if applicable; and 4) Supplemental information – all other attachments combined into one indexed file, such as resumes, and current and pending support.

(a) Required Forms. At the time of application submission, applicants must complete and submit the following forms with signatures of the Authorized Representative of the submitting institution. (Note: submission through Grants.gov results in automatic electronic signatures on these forms. Only the versions of these forms that are available in Grants.gov are acceptable):

- (i) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- (ii) SF-424-A, Budget Information, Non-Construction Programs
- (iii) SF-424-B, Assurances, Non-Construction Programs
- (iv) CD-511, Certifications Regarding Lobbying

(v) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable; see instructions on form).

(b) Title Page. A title page must be submitted and contain ALL of the following elements:

- (i) Project's title;
- (ii) Funding amount requested from NOAA, as well as funding requested for each year of the project;
- (iii) Principal Investigator (PI) and co-PI names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and fax numbers. The PI listed on the title page should be affiliated with the institution submitting the pre-application;
- (iv) Executive Summary (150 words maximum). The executive summary should be a concise overview of the objectives of the project, the project activities, the expected outcome(s), and the rationale for the work proposed. Please note: project summaries of applications that receive funding may be posted on program-related websites and/or included in notices that NOAA may send to members of Congress.

(c) Project Description (15 page limit). The project description section must not exceed 15 pages and must follow the requirements for applications in IV.B.1, Content and Form of Applications. Page limits are inclusive of figures and other visual materials, but exclusive of title pages, budget information, references, work plan/milestone chart, resumes, and current and pending support. A template for the project description can be found online at www.noaa.gov/office-education/2018-coop.

The proposed project must be described completely. The project description should clearly describe the project's goals, implementation, and management. It should provide a full justification/rationale for the project. Specifically, this section should include:

(i) Objective(s) and Expected Outcomes. Describe the specific project objectives to be achieved during the project period. Describe the expected outputs and outcomes, and explain how the activities and expected outputs and outcomes support the purpose of this funding opportunity and advance NOAA's mission, as described in section I.A.

(ii) Proposed Activities. Describe the proposed activities, including: all activities that will be undertaken and/or products that will be created; the need for those products or activities; and the process that will be used to develop and implement all activities and products. Applications should clearly demonstrate how the proposed project is informed by best practices and should cite appropriate literature references that support the proposed approach.

(iii) Personnel. Describe the qualifications and capabilities of the personnel who will be involved in the project.

(iv) Institutional Capability. Describe the institutional profile and capabilities of the applicant. If partners will be used to implement proposed project activities, also describe the

project partners' capabilities and roles, as well as how the applicant will coordinate the project partners.

(v) NOAA Assets. Describe how the project will incorporate NOAA products and/or other NOAA assets into the project activities (for a partial listing of NOAA assets, see <http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/grants/noaa-assets>).

(vi) Scales of Project Implementation. Because of uncertainty of federal funding, a description of how the project will be implemented at different funding levels is requested. Scales of project implementation should be described for three funding levels of about \$200,000 per year, \$600,000 per year, and \$1,000,000 per year. Note: the lowest scale of effort should support the full suite of activities described in I.A.2 above. For the two higher scales of effort, the applicant should describe how they would support an expanded small-scale grant project. A separate budget description is not required for each level of funding; however, the project description should describe how the project activities will change at each funding level.

(d) Proposed Work Plan/Milestone Chart. Provide a timeline of major tasks and target milestones for important intermediate and final products and outcomes. The tasks should relate both to the budget and to the intended deliverables or activities. There is no page limit for this element.

(e) Resumes. Provide resumes of the Principal Investigators (PIs), co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs), and other key personnel critical to the success of the project. Ensure resumes include a list of professional and academic credentials and address qualifications relevant to conducting the proposed work as this will help reviewers assess the proposed project team's qualifications. Limit resumes to a maximum of 3 pages each.

(f) Current and Pending Support for PIs and Co-PIs. Describe all current and pending federal and non-federal funding, including application(s) to this funding opportunity, for all PIs and co-PIs listed on the title page. The capability of the designated PIs and co-PIs to complete the proposed work in light of present commitments to other projects must be assessable. Therefore, please list the percentage of time the individuals have committed to other federal or non-federal grant-funded projects. If any PI or Co-PI has no current or pending funding, this must be clearly indicated on a separate page under a heading "Current and Pending Support". There is no page limit for this element. A template for summarizing Current and Pending Support can be found online at www.noaa.gov/office-education/2018-coop.

(g) Budget. Provide a detailed budget table and budget narrative that clearly identifies and justifies the cost of separable elements of the proposed work. Consistent with the scales of

project implementation described in the project description above, applicants should base the proposed budget on a funding level of \$1,000,000 annually, where \$200,000 covers all of the project activities and the remaining \$800,000 supports an expanded small-scale grant program. A separate budget description is not required for each level of funding; however the project description should describe how the project activities will change at each funding level. The budget table should include a detailed year-by-year breakdown by category of cost (object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares (if applicable). The budget narrative should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the SF-424A budget. The budget table and narrative should reference the GMD Budget Narrative Guidance at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/training.html>.

The budget section of the application should provide enough detail to allow Office of Education staff and the review panel to evaluate the level of effort proposed by investigators and staff on the project. The budget must include all anticipated expenses in order to realistically describe for reviewers what resources will be necessary to carry out the project. NOAA staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. As appropriate, the narrative and table must provide details on:

- Personnel salaries and fringe benefits (specifying the salary plus the percent of time and/or number of months devoted to the project for every individual to be paid by the project).
- Travel, including costs (i.e., transportation, lodging, meals), a description of anticipated travel, destinations, the number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If the actual trip details are unknown, applicants should state the basis for the proposed travel costs. Travel costs may be charged on an actual cost, on a per diem or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the non-federal entity's non-federally-funded activities and in accordance with non-federal entity's written travel reimbursement policies. In the absence of an acceptable, written non-federal entity policy regarding travel costs, the rates and amounts established under 5 U.S.C. 5701-11, ("Travel and Subsistence Expenses; Mileage Allowances"), or by the Administrator of General Services, or by the President (or his or her designee) pursuant to any provisions of such subchapter must apply to travel under federal awards (48 C.F.R. 31.205-46(a)) Federal travel per diem rates: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>.
- Equipment and supplies, if applicable. See 2 C.F.R. §200.313 and See 2 C.F.R. §200.314 for additional guidance on equipment and supplies costs.
- Contractual costs. Applicants should provide the same amount of budget detail for any

contracts as they did for the applicant institution (broken down by the categories shown on the SF-424A form). Applicants should indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates in budget description for each contract. Budget description should describe activities to occur or products or services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. All contracts must be consistent with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317-200.326 for procurement contracts.

- Other direct costs, including printing, publications, evaluations, and communication expenses as well as sub-awards to project partners. Applicants should provide the same amount of budget detail for any sub-awards as they did for the applicant institution (broken down by the categories shown on the SF-424A form). Applicants should indicate the basis for the cost and price estimates in budget description for each sub-award. The budget description should describe activities to occur and/or products to be developed and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. All sub-awards must be consistent with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.330-200.332.

- Indirect costs, if applicable. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.56, indirect costs, which are sometimes referred to as facilities and administrative (F&A) costs, are those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefiting without an effort that is disproportionate to the results achieved. Indirect costs may include costs for basic operational functions, including lights, water, and insurance. If indirect costs are included, the negotiated rate must be requested, and the application must include a copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the federal government. Indirect-cost-rate-agreement documentation is required for sub-awardees, and indirect cost rates at the negotiated levels should be paid by the primary awardee.

If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a federal agency, they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. § 200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is:

Lamar Revis, Grants Officer
NOAA Grants Management Division
1325 East West Highway, 9th Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
lamar.revis@noaa.gov

If appropriate, include in the budget narrative a description of any in-kind resources or

equipment that will be provided to support this project. See <http://www.ago.noaa.gov/grants/training.html> for guidance on your budget narrative from NOAA's Grants Management Division. See www.noaa.gov/office-education/2018-coop for a budget narrative model and a budget table model.

There is no page limit for this element.

(h) References Cited. If literature references are cited in the project narrative, then a References Cited section should be included. Each reference should include the names of all authors in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication, the article title, publication or publication title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. While there is no established page limit, this section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside the 15-page project description.

(i) Given the nature of the work expected under this funding opportunity, no environmental impact is anticipated. Therefore, the application does not need to reference the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire.

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

To enable the use of an universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, 31 USC 6101 Note, to the extent applicable, any application awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM), which may be accessed online at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. Applicants are also required to use the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS), as identified in OMB guidance, 2 CFR Part 25, which may be accessed at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=2dae4a7dcd5848a6364bb94d2d7786dd&mc=tue&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2subtitleA.tpl>.

D. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for the receipt of applications is 11:59 pm EDT on April 9, 2018. (Note that NOAA's Office of Education staff will only be available to answer questions until 5 PM Eastern Time.) Late applications are neither reviewed nor considered for funding. Applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov; no hard copy or email applications will be accepted.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by an automated receipt of the date and time of submission. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by three automated email responses (the first email confirms receipt by

Grants.gov, not NOAA; the second email confirms that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). If all email notifications are not provided within two (2) days of application submission, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk and oed.grants@noaa.gov. PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all required elements have been appropriately submitted before the deadline. Additional instructions for Grants.gov can be found at www.noaa.gov/office-education/2018-coop.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted to this funding opportunity are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

F. Funding Restrictions

There are no funding restrictions.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov. Please refer to important information in Submission Dates and Times above to help ensure your application is received on time. PLEASE ALSO NOTE: For a list of software applications that allow you to successfully navigate the Grants.gov pages and complete your submission visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

(1) Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (30 points): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state or local activities. The application should describe how well the proposed project addresses NOAA's stated objectives and priorities stated in section I.A. Specifically reviewers will evaluate the likelihood that the proposed activities will:

- Facilitate partnerships and help build networks among organizations with complementary environmental and scientific literacy missions (5 points);
- Enable the evaluation of NOAA supported external programs for the purpose of educating NOAA partners, as well as informing members of the broader science education and/or environmental education communities on lessons learned and best practices related to

their fields (5 points);

- Support competitions that encourage science literacy and environmental literacy, including but not limited to, science fairs, art competitions, and small-scale grant awards (5 points);

- Design and develop new educational materials that advance NOAA's education mission and integrate NOAA assets in both online and in print or exhibit displays, and enable the dissemination of those materials to appropriate and targeted audiences (5 points);

- Support professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers, informal educators, and other educational providers (5 points); and

- Address goals and objectives from NOAA's 2015-2035 Education Strategic Plan (<http://www.noaa.gov/explainers/noaa-education-strategic-plan>) (5 points).

(2) Technical/scientific merit (45 points): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Reviewers will evaluate:

- The overall technical feasibility of the project activities. The applicant should provide enough detail for the reviewer to assess whether the proposed methods are educationally and technically sound (i.e., based on best practices) and appropriate to achieve project objectives for each of the following:

- i. Supporting, co-hosting, and/or facilitating conferences, workshops, and/or events (4 points);

- ii. Identifying and acquiring the appropriate tools, technologies, and partners to conduct data collection, perform analysis, and disseminate results for independent program evaluations (4 points);

- iii. Supporting student-based art and/or science competitions (4 points);

- iv. Implementing a small-scale grant program of up to \$800,000 per year, including developing and distributing an announcement of funding, accepting and reviewing applications, organizing external reviewers, and selecting and notifying awardees (5 points);

- v. Designing and developing educational materials that advance NOAA's education mission and integrate NOAA assets in digital, print, or exhibit displays, and disseminating of those materials to appropriate audiences (4 points); and

- vi. Recruiting participants, implementing, and evaluating professional development opportunities (4 points).

- Whether the proposed activities will be successfully implemented on the scale(s) described (i.e., at \$200,000, \$600,000, and \$1,000,000 per year) (6 points);

- To what extent the project has clearly stated objectives that are measurable, will be measured, and are appropriate to the target audience(s) (7 points); and

- Likelihood that the project will meet milestones and achieve anticipated results in the time proposed (7 points).

(3) Overall Qualifications of Applicant (15 points): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Reviewers will evaluate applications based on the following (as demonstrated by resumes, past project experience, and accomplishments of key staff):

- The relevance of the qualifications of the PIs, co-PIs, and key personnel, including their previous experience in designing, implementing and managing the proposed activities (7 points);
- The likelihood that the participating institution(s) have the appropriate resources to carry out the proposed activities and have the ability to complete the proposed project successfully (6 points); and
- Whether there is a clear delineation of responsibilities of the project's key personnel and whether there are adequate communication mechanisms in place for coordinating among all project partners (2 points).

(4) Project Costs (10 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Reviewers will evaluate:

- The appropriateness of the requested resources to accomplish the proposed work within the indicated time-frame (6 points); and
- The adequacy of detail in the budget table and narrative to allow an informed determination of how well all costs associated with the project are justified (4 points).

B. Review and Selection Process

Upon receipt of an application by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with minimum requirements. Minimum requirements include all of the following:

- Applicant is eligible to apply;
- Application was received on time;
- Complete application package.

All applications that meet the eligibility and minimum requirements will be evaluated and scored by a group of independent reviewers, who are federal or non-federal experts, each having relevant expertise. The reviews will be conducted by mail review. The mail review will consist of each application being reviewed by at least 3 reviewers. Each reviewer will independently evaluate each application and provide an individual score and written comments using the evaluation criteria provided in section V.A

The Federal Program Officers (FPOs) will neither vote nor score applications as part of

the review process. The FPOs will make their recommendations for funding based on rank order and the selection factors listed in the next section (V.C) to the Selecting Official, the Director of NOAA Education, who is responsible for making final recommendations to the NOAA Grants Officer.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official will recommend applications for funding in the 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. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. By geographic area
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By subject areas
 - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
4. Program priorities and policy factors;
5. Applicant's prior award performance;
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Officer.

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

The successful applicant may be asked to modify objectives, project plans, timelines, and/or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Review of applications will occur from April through May, 2018. Negotiations with the successful applicant will be conducted in May. 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. Projects

should not be initiated in expectation of federal funding until an official notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Officer.

Successful applicants will receive notification electronically from the Office of Education in early June 2018 that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. The official notice of funding, authorized by a NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Projects funded under this announcement during this fiscal year will start no earlier than August 1, 2018.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The official notice of funding is expected to occur in late July 2018. The official notice is authorized by a NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorization for the project to begin. The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by a NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system to the project's Authorized Representative. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification electronically from the Office of Education by June 30, 2018 that their application was not recommended for funding (declined) or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements prescribed in Sections IV.B and IV.D.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

2. **PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION: 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>.

3. **UNPAID OR DELINQUENT TAX LIABILITY.** Certifications Regarding Federal

Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns. In accordance with Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

4. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA): NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA 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.

5. 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 apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

6. DOC TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award

package in NOAA's Grants Online system at <http://www.ago.noaa.gov> and at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>.

7. 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. 200.205. 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 Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

8. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA): In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NOAA in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

9. 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 (MSI), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskans Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

10. EXECUTIVE ORDER 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review): It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

11. EXECUTIVE ORDER 13132 (Federalism): It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

C. Reporting

1) Grant recipients are required to provide semi-annual progress and financial reports. Reports are to be submitted electronically through the NOAA Grants Online system at <https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov>.

a. Progress Reports: Progress on each award is communicated to NOAA in the form of performance progress reports, the requirements of which are outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.301. Progress reports should provide specific, project-related information such as details on the accomplishments, outputs and outcomes that have occurred during the reporting period, corresponding with the goals and objectives identified in the project narrative. A suggested template for semi-annual and final progress reports will be provided to grant recipients. Progress reports are required every 6 months from the time an award starts until it is closed. A final comprehensive report is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award, along with the final summative evaluation report. The final comprehensive report shall include an executive summary of the project's outcomes, including major findings of the project evaluation, that can be shared publicly online and in print as desired by NOAA's Office of Education. The summative evaluation report should be a separate document from the final comprehensive report on the project.

b. Financial Reports: Federal Cash Transaction reports, form SF-425) should be submitted electronically through the NOAA Grants Online system and are due semi-annually on October 30th and April 30th for the preceding 6-month period (April 1st to September 30th and October 1st to March 30th) or portion thereof if the project start or end-date falls in the middle of one of these intervals. The Final Financial Status report, form SF-425, is a comprehensive financial report that is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award.

2) 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 sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at <https://www.fsrs.gov/> on all sub-awards over \$25,000. Refer to 2 CFR Parts 170.

VII. Agency Contacts

You can contact the program officers: Bronwen Rice at bronwen.rice@noaa.gov. For further information about NOAA's Office of Education, please visit the office website at <http://www.noaa.gov/office-education>.

VIII. Other Information

Note: Resources that may be helpful in preparing an application can be found at: www.noaa.gov/office-education/2018-coop. This page also contains answers to frequently asked questions.